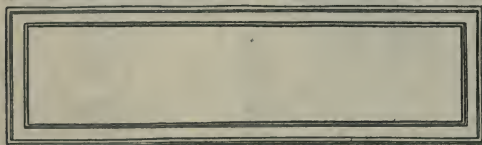


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**OLD & NEW JAPAN**

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TO VIII  
APPENDIX



ON THE SHORE OF THE INLAND SEA THE FISHER  
WOMEN GATHER SHELL-FISH!

*Frontispiece.*



# OLD AND NEW JAPAN.

*Maroon*

BY CLIVE HOLLAND  
WITH FIFTY COLOURED PICTURES  
BY MONTAGU SMYTH



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# OLD & NEW JAPAN

## CHAPTER I

### THE LEGENDARY GENESIS OF JAPAN, AND THE NATIONAL SPIRIT

**A**ROUND the genesis of the fascinating and beautiful land of Japan hangs a web of mythological tradition which is not easy of unravelment. That Japan was the first created portion of the world is clear—to the Japanese; but how, or when the rest of the work of creation was accomplished, forms no part of the tradition, nor is there any plain indication in early Japanese history or mythology.

The earliest known account of the birth of the Island Empire of the East dates from about the year A.D. 712, when the oldest book of Japanese history, commenced at the command of the Emperor Temmu and finished under the direction of the Empress Gemmyō, was presented to her Court under the title of *Ko-ji-ki*, or the Records of Ancient Matters. It was undoubtedly founded almost entirely upon oral tradition, which, as the art of writing and printing was not known in Japan till A.D. 284, was the only means of preserving and handing down the many traditions, mythological and otherwise, in which were enshrined the early history of the country. It need not be pointed out that such a system of perpetuating history is

at best a very uncertain one, and likely, indeed, to result in the introduction of much material of no value, and of a most bewildering and contradictory character. Some idea of the possible errors which would almost surely creep in, may be gathered from the fact that for the twenty-five years during which *Ko-ji-ki* was in course of compilation, the traditions and myths which had been laboriously collected were only preserved in the memory of Hiye-dano-are.

Nine years after the completion of these records of ancient matters, appeared yet another work called *Nihon-ji*, or the Chronicles of Japan, which in a measure supplements and elucidates the first one. Although the events recorded in these two important books are in many cases the same, the latter volume is less purely Japanese than its forerunner, being more overlaid or coloured by Chinese philosophy, whilst the myths dealing with the creation more especially show the influence of the latter. The first book has been ably translated into English by Basil Hall Chamberlain; the other has not been completely translated. The Japanese themselves hold the latter in high repute, even though it is probably more overlaid with the embroidery of myths than the more purely Japanese *Ko-ji-ki*.

To these two works chiefly one must look for an account of the origin of the Empire of Japan and the Japanese race. But to them may be wisely added the ancient Japanese (Shintō) Rituals set down in the *Yengi-shiki* or Code of Ceremonial Law.

It will be easily gathered from the circumstances to which we have referred, that all knowledge of the earlier events of Japanese history, certainly of those anterior to the ninth century, must be accepted as being founded exclusively on tradition, and not based upon contemporary documentary evidence. Into this category must not only



come the whole of the history of what is known as the Age of the Gods, but also the reigns of the various emperors from Jimmu to Richū, covering the period 660 B.C. to A.D. 400.

It is by placing reliance upon the two works *Ko-ji-ki* and *Nihon-ji*, that Japanese scholars and historians have been able to construct the earlier history of the country and its people. There is, of course, abounding evidence that grave discrepancies must have crept into the narrative, but there must be a sufficiently large substratum of truth to make their work of fascinating interest.

Under the circumstances there is only one course to pursue, namely, to accept this earlier history of the race as tradition pure and simple; but tradition which has doubtless a considerable basis of truth.

At the creation three gods, who came into existence without being created and ultimately died, were in heaven; their names were Ame-no-mi-naka-nushi, Kamu-musubi, and Take-mi-masubi, which freely translated mean the Master-of-the-August-Centre-of-Heaven, the Divine-Producing-Wondrous-Deity, and the High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity. There are but scant traces of these having been worshipped, and it seems more than probable that the names were merely descriptive of the sun. Then several pairs of deities came into existence without creation, and ultimately died. The first pair, rejoicing in the quaintly involved but not altogether incomprehensible names of Pleasant-Reedshoot-Prince-Elder-Deity and Heavenly-Outside-Standing-Deity, were supposed to have been born when the earth was yet young, and, according to the Japanese idea, in an amorphous condition, from a thing which grew up like a reed-shoot. The five deities we have already mentioned were known as the Heavenly deities, and they were followed by another pair which also came into existence without creation known

as Eternally-Earthly-Standing-Deity, and Luxuriant-Making-Entire-Master-Deity. These, with the following five pairs of deities, were known as the seven generations of gods: Mud-Earth-Lord and Mud-Earth-Lady; Germ-Making-entire-Deity and Life-Making-entire-Deity; Elder-of-the-Great-Place and Elder-Lady-of-the-Great-Place; Perfect-Exterior-Deity and August-Awful-Lady; and finally Izanagi and Izanami, or the Male-who-invites and the Female-who-invites.

It is the last two who are the legendary parents of the earth, sun, moon, and all living things, and in the Japanese version of the creation these two are commanded by the other deities to make and consolidate the earth, which they found drifting about "like unto floating oil." To do this they stood on "the floating bridge of heaven" which spanned the waste of waters, and reaching down stirred them with a jewelled spear that had been given them for the purpose.

The drops which fell from the spear, after Izanagi had dipped it into the brine, coalesced and became an island called Onogoro or Self-Coagulated-Island, supposed to have been one of the numerous small islands of the Inland Sea near Awaji. The legend goes on to say that the two deities then descended upon the earth and took up their abode upon the island they had thus created. Here they begat the other numerous islands which ultimately were to form the Kingdom of Japan, as well as the gods of the winds, trees, mountains, and plains, the last two of whom in turn became the parent stock of the lesser hills, valleys, and tracts of land. Izanami was also destined to be the mother in turn of the goddess of food, and of Kagutsuchi, the god of fire. But in giving birth to the latter she died, and in the rage of his despair Izanagi slew the young god. From the drops of blood that clung to and fell from his sword sprang other deities, of whom





AND THEN SOMETIMES EVEN IN JAPAN THE MIST COMES AND OBLITERATES  
THE DISTANT LANDSCAPE.

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the most important as regards the ultimate history of Japan was Take-mika-tzuchi, who ultimately emerges from the legendary mists as the conqueror of Japan for the Mikado's ancestors.

After the slaying of the God of Fire Izanagi descended into the infernal regions in search of his dead wife Izanami, by a passage on the boundary of Idzumi and Iwami. He heard the voice of Izanami, who told him from her new habitation that he must not enter, but that she would try and persuade the god of Hades to permit her return if Izanagi would wait for her. Then she vanished, and afterwards Izanagi, becoming impatient at her non-appearance, forced his way into Hades, and found her, but as a putrefying corpse. Terrified by the horrible sight he fled, pursued by legions of evil spirits, and returned to earth, where to purify himself he washed in a stream on the island of Tsukuschi. Whilst performing this act a fresh series of gods were created, springing into existence out of the various articles of his clothing as he cast them away. From his staff sprang a god, from his girdle another, and so on. Six deities were born from the two bracelets, one of which he wore on either arm; in all, twelve from these and his clothing. All of them were given complicated but appropriate names.

Izanagi finding, however, the waters in the higher reach of the stream too rapid, and those of the lower reach too turgid, he proceeded with his washing in the middle reach. As he bathed the evil spirits from Hades were washed away, and other numerous gods were created, all of whose names it is unnecessary to mention. Afterwards as he washed below and on the surface of the stream, sea gods destined to have human descendants were created, and these were afterwards worshipped at Sumiyoshi, near Sakai. Then as he washed his right eye a deity was born whose name was Tsukuyomi-no-Mikoto, or His-August-

Moon-Night-Possessor; and when he washed his left eye was born a deity who bore the name of Amaterasu-Ō Mikami or Great-August-Deity-who-Shines-from-Heaven. The last is often called the Sun Goddess. From the washing of his nose sprang yet another deity, known as Susanō-no-Mikoto or His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness. This deity is supposed by many to be the god who influenced the tides, in other words the Moon God. The loveliness and cleverness of these three last children so delighted Izanagi's heart that he determined to bestow upon them high positions. Taking, therefore, his necklace from off his neck he gave it to the Great-August-Deity-who-Shines-from-Heaven, or Sun Goddess, saying to her at the same time, "Have rule in the plains of high heaven." To the August-Moon-Night-Possessor he gave the dominion over night. And to His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness he gave to rule over the plains of the sea. But the last-named would not assume the dominion given to him, but wept until his beard had grown so long that it reached to his waist. Then his father asked him why he had not assumed dominion over the sea, and he replied that he preferred to go to his mother in Hades. This angered Izanagi, who promptly cast him off.

There are several legends connected with this same Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness, one of which makes him ultimately descend from Heaven on to the Korean Peninsula, he having first gone to the Heavenly plains (after expulsion by Izanagi) to pay a visit to his sister the Sun Goddess. The legend proceeds to say that from Korea he crossed to Japan, and in this myth there would appear to be enshrined a fact which is most probably genuine history. And, indeed, this opinion is somewhat borne out by the structural resemblance which exists between the language of Korea and that of Japan.



It was whilst on this visit to his sister that His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness' sincerity of intention was put to the test in a somewhat strange fashion by the Sun Goddess, who was suspicious of him. Taking his sword from him she broke it in three pieces, which she crunched in her mouth. Then she spat these pieces out, which, with her breath, turned into three female deities. Not to be outdone, His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness took the various jewels which his sister the Sun Goddess was wearing, and putting them in his mouth also crunched them up and blew them out. These, like the pieces of his own sword, were transformed into deities, only they were five in number instead of three, and male instead of female.

The Sun Goddess then claimed that the male deities which had been produced from her jewels were hers, and the female which had sprung from the pieces of his sword were Susanō's. This angered His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness, who argued that he had won the trial by wager because the children by his sword were beautiful girls. In his anger he not only broke down the fences surrounding the Sun Goddess's rice-fields, defiled her garden, and filled up the water sluices used to irrigate it, but also committed many dreadful excesses, in consequence of which outrageous conduct the Sun Goddess retired into a cavern, where she sat with her maidens, and closed the door. This action caused complete darkness to envelop not only the Heavens but also the Central-Land-of-the-Reed-Plains. Then, so the legend goes, there were many strange portents and happenings; and myriads of deities gathered in the bed of the tranquil river of Heaven, and besought the child of the High-August-Producing-Wondrous-Deity to devise a plan by which the Sun Goddess might be tempted to come out of the cavern and make the world light again. Then the

gods, in pursuance of the plan agreed upon, took a branch of Sakaki,<sup>1</sup> the sacred tree of the Shintōists, and planted it in front of the entrance to the cavern. Upon this they hung beautiful jewels, strings of precious stones, rolls of white and blue cloth, and a mirror. Then they gathered together the farmyard cocks and made them crow, and the mirthful goddess Ame-mo-uzume-no-Mikoto danced as did others, and Ame-no-ko-yane-no-Mikoto, the wisest of all the gods, recited the rituals. Hearing the noise the Sun Goddess, perhaps overcome by the curiosity of her sex, cautiously opened the door, and peeping out asked the reason of the disturbance. The revellers told her it was because they had found another goddess more beautiful than she; at the same time they held before her face the mirror they had made and hung upon the tree. Astonished at the reflection she stepped out incautiously, and they hastily shut the door of the cavern behind her. And thus did the high plain of Heaven, and the Central-Land-of-the-Reed-Plains, once more become light.

His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Augustness commits yet another crime by killing the Goddess of Food, Ōgetsu-hime, and as a punishment is expelled from Heaven. He descended to earth, and came to the province of Izumo, where he found an old man who once had had eight beautiful daughters, one of whom had been each year devoured by a serpent till but one, called Inada-hime, remained. The god rescued her by killing the eight-headed and eight-tailed serpent, which he had made drunk with *saké*, and obtained from one of the tails the wonderful and mythical sword which, with the mirror the gods had made to circumvent the Sun Goddess, and the necklace of precious gems, formed the legendary regalia of the early Japanese sovereigns. The marvellous sword was ultimately deposited, and became an object of veneration and worship

<sup>1</sup> *Cleyera japonica*.



in the temple of Asuta at Miya; the mirror became the emblem of the Sun Goddess in her great temple at Ise, and the necklace is preserved in the palace of the Mikado at Tōkiō, with replicas of the wonderful sword, named *Kusa-nagi* or the Grass Cutter, and the mirror. These objects form a part of the modern regalia of Japan.

Concerning the five male deities who sprang from the Sun Goddess's necklace when that jewel was crunched up and spat out by Susanō, it is only necessary to mention the eldest, who rejoiced in the lengthy name of Masa-ka-A-katsu-kachi-haya-bi-Ame-no-Oshi-ho-mimi-no-Mikoto, which, literally translated, means His-Augustness-Truly-Conqueror-I-conquer-Conquering-Swift-Heavenly-Great-Great-Ear. This extraordinary collection of names is a somewhat exaggerated sample of the use of honorific titles frequently conferred by the Japanese on their distinguished men and women; many of whom, though apparently deities, were most probably actually human beings.

It was the foregoing lengthily-named deity whom the Sun Goddess adopted as her favourite and heir, and ultimately sought to send to earth to take up the sovereignty of the beautiful land of Japan. The Sun Goddess's *protégé*, however, discovering that his future kingdom was in a very unsettled condition, refused to descend to it, and resigned his claims in favour of his son, whose mythological name was even longer than that of his pusillanimous parent. To make the difficult path of sovereignty easier for this other god, two inferior deities were sent on in advance, who, on behalf of the Sun Goddess's grandson, received the submission of a descendant of one of Susanō's (the Impetuous-Male-Augustness) wives, who, with his sons, held sovereignty in Izumo. Then the Sun Goddess's grandson descended in company with five distinguished followers, named Futodama, Ischikore-dome, Tamanoya, Ama-tsu-koya-ne, and Uzume-no-

Mikoto, settling on the summit of Mount Takachiho, in Tsukushi.

There is a mountain still connected with this legendary descent in the present island of Kiushiu. It was here, now the province of Satsuma, and not in the province of Izumo, the stronghold of the conquered Ō-kuni-nushi, that the Sun Goddess's grandson, whose name is generally shortened to Ninigi-no-Mikoto, established his palace.

The Prince one day subsequently, whilst walking along the shore, met the beautiful daughter of the God of Mountains, and promptly fell in love with her. It was this Ko-no-hana-saku-ya-bime, or the Princess Brilliantly-Blossoming-like-Flowers-on-the-Trees, that he married, and by whom he had three sons, Ho-suseri-no-Mikoto, Ho-deri-no-Mikoto, and Ho-ori-no-Mikoto; the latter of whom married, whilst on his travels to the region of the sea-god, the Princess Toyo-tama-bime. A child was born to them under romantic, or rather mythical circumstances, who was nursed by his mother's sister, whom he afterwards—on growing up—married. The son of this marriage, named Kama-yamato-Iware-biko, is known to historians as Jimmu Tennō, who became the first Emperor of Japan, about 660 B.C.

It is at this point that, in the opinion of the Japanese themselves, pure myth and history part company; and this line of demarcation is generally accepted by scholars and students; and if not unassailable, it still forms at least as good and satisfactory a division as any other. It seems more than probable, however, that there is a large substratum of history in the mythical tales relating to persons and events of far earlier date. But it must be noted that the extant records are of a far later period than the commencement of the historical era, according to the Japanese of to-day. These make the latter com-

mence with the accession of Jimmu, whilst the popularly accepted chronology is almost certainly fictitious down to the end of the fourth century, and the documentary records and evidence do not commence till the end of the seventh or beginning of the eighth.

With regard to the real or entirely mythical character of the personages who flit through the traditions and legends of early Japan, it is difficult to decide. But there seems good reason for considering both the Sun Goddess and her brother, Susanō-no-Mikoto, or His-Brave-Speedy-Impetuous-Male-Augustness, as actual historical personages; the names by which they and other gods and goddesses are referred to in the original legends being merely honorific titles conferred upon them after their deaths, although the original bestowal of these was overlooked in later times. For this reason, such deities as Amaterasu-O-Mi-Kami, or the Great-August-Deity-who-Shines-from-Heaven, identified with the Mikado's ancestress the Sun; Ōgetsu-hime, the Goddess of Food, and Ko-no-hana-saku-ya-bime, the God of the Mountains, probably had human originals. Indeed, it is almost impossible to account for, or explain in any other way, the genealogies found in Japanese records. The word *kami*, too, which is so frequently translated as "god," "deity," or "goddess," is not thus accurately rendered—its literal meaning being "superior." The Mikado's own most usual title, O-kami, though esteemed by the commonalty to be indicative of his divine origin, as a matter of fact is merely a title of respect bestowed upon personages of high rank by their more immediate vassals or dependants.

An examination of the names of the Shintō gods held most in honour, reveals the fact that many of them are undoubtedly human beings who at various times have been deified, probably in pursuance of the natural religion, originally ancestor-worship, upon the foundations of which



a certain amount of nature-worship has from time to time been superimposed.

It is from many of these Shintō gods, goddesses, heroes, and conquerors that the Imperial family of Japan traces its descent. But it is impossible and unnecessary in a book of the present kind to enter into Japanese history further than we have done to enable us to briefly tell the story of the creation of Japan, and to show the legendary character of much of the history dealing with the first bearers of the Imperial sovereignty. It is sufficient to add that the Emperor Jimmu, who began to reign in 660 B.C., and died in 585 B.C., was the first of the unique line of sovereigns who have for a period of nearly 2500 years governed Japan—the present Emperor, Mutsuhito, being the hundred and twenty-first link in the Imperial chain.

Over the Japanese mind the traditionally divine though mythical origin of the founders of the present dynasty has, doubtless, in times past exercised a potent influence. It has certainly invested their throne with a double lustre, that of both temporal and spiritual power; and the people, who are themselves the descendants of those who served under the sway of the far-off Emperor Jimmu and his immediate successors, regard this divinely Imperial throne with unbounded reverence and pride.

How far advanced from myths and abstractions the present-day Japanese are is known to all the world. The Japan of to-day, however, with some slight modifications as regards area, is practically identical with that mythical Empire which evolved itself from the drops of brine that fell from the spear of Izanagi.

That a nation which had so fascinating, though legendary, a beginning, and possesses so many picturesque attributes, should exercise a strange allurements over the minds of more Western and less romantic peoples, is per-

A complex musical score for a string quartet, featuring staves with notes, rests, and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f'. The notation includes various musical symbols such as clefs, time signatures, and articulation marks. The score is written in a traditional musical notation style, with multiple staves for different instruments.



A JUTTING, TREE-CLAD POINT ALONG THE COAST.

haps little to be wondered at. More than one famous traveller, who has "ranged the world" like Alexander in the hope of discovering new worlds to conquer, or in which to be interested, has admitted that in Japan he has found the one land which neither disappoints nor palls. And none who have ever come under the spell of its strange beauty and astonishing interest in happy circumstances, leave it without the hope, which ever lingers on through the years, that some day they may return. In this quaint, mysterious land, with its at first elusive and then all-compelling beauty, one finds a country of enchantment, which differs so widely from Western, and even from other Eastern lands, that it stands unique.

It is difficult at first entirely to account for its charm. It is not solely owing to its scenery, lovely though that is; nor is it wholly because of its climate, or customs, though these things in themselves are sufficiently beautiful and curious to arouse one's enthusiasm. And so, after serious consideration, one is compelled to think that it is Japan as a whole, and the results of centuries of isolation working out a unique scheme of civilisation, religion, art, morals and customs, which makes the Island Empire of the East so charming and so fascinating a study.

By what processes the human mind has worked through the two and a half centuries of complete isolation which Japan experienced it is not easy at first to conceive. But the wonder remains, in the least curious and industrious student of her history, that instead of Japan relapsing (as might have been anticipated) into a state of barbarism or semi-savagery, she spent these years of quietude and freedom from outside influences in the refinement of her life, arts, and national characteristics. It is this strange advance, when a retrograde movement would have seemed most probable, if not, indeed, absolutely inevitable, which has caused Japan to be the wonder of the world of thinkers



and of nation-builders. Her success in modern warfare, startling though it has been, is, after all, but a link in the chain of the national history, and the line of conduct and strength of character which, year by year, age by age, each generation has been silently perfecting, and slowly but surely building up.

Most of those who have studied the subject of the genesis of the Japanese race have been confronted by a problem so puzzling that the actual solution would appear even now to be far from attained.

In this far Eastern Sea stands an Island Empire which in some of its characteristics, its traditions, its art, and its legendary lore has a close resemblance to an empire so distant both in space and time as that of Ancient Greece. Differing as do the modern Japanese almost as much from the Chinese as they do from ourselves (almost the sole suggestion of their Mongolian origin being the obliqueness of their eyebrows, which, after all, is only an indication of an origin in high latitudes), there yet seems little doubt that from Korea came the largest strain of blood in the Japanese race. But it is esteemed more than possible by distinguished ethnologists that the Malays, who drifted up from the south, contributed some of the fighting blood to the peoples who, as invading tribes from the South and West, gradually drove northward the Ainos, or original inhabitants, who are nowadays confined entirely to the northernmost island. But what is less speculative, and indeed almost certain, is the fact that whatever combination of blood has gone to the making of the Japanese race, the result of such combination is sufficiently startling.

Of one thing we may be certain, that with no trace of Aryan blood in their veins, they possess traits of a distinctly Aryan character. For example, they have the love of and capacity for progress of that division of the human



race, which not even three centuries of isolation could extinguish; and also the spirit of refinement which perished with the Grecian Empire in the West, but has through the ages been kept alive in Japan, and has, indeed, become a part of the people themselves; and it is this survival which has served to make the Japanese of to-day, though severed in blood, still in all essential things the Indo-Europeans of the Far East. It is the possession of these characteristics which gives hope that the Japanese may prove capable of being the pioneers for a new civilisation of the other and less progressive nations of Asia.

The story of Japan's isolation of many centuries, which has made her of such surpassing interest to the student and the traveller, is only equalled by the fascination which has attended the awakening of Japan to the realities of a civilisation so unlike her own.

From being but a few decades ago a mysterious land, almost unknown to all save the most enterprising and intrepid of travellers, Japan has emerged as a country and a people possessing infinite possibilities, and many qualities which students of the history of nations would have naturally supposed to have become lost or at least atrophied by her long period of isolation.

By a transformation almost as sudden as one of those magical changes accomplished by a wizard's rod, the people whom Westerners had learned to admire for their courtesy, refinement, and artistic genius, and who were popularly supposed or at least presumed to have only these qualities we have named, suddenly have taken their place amongst the militant powers of the world, not to be overlooked in the jugglery of diplomacy or the balancing of the scales of power. After centuries of almost unbroken peace within and without their own border so far as they themselves have been concerned, they have suddenly

exhibited such a genius for military strategy and aptitude for war that Western nations have looked on amazed.

But to those who are acquainted with Japan's past history, with the evolutionary processes which have been going on whilst she remained an unknown land ; with the characteristics and ambitions which distinguish the people one and all, the military and naval triumphs of the last decade over two vast and unwieldy empires need occasion little astonishment. Japan has known herself to be credited with only what may be called the "milder virtues": those belonging to refined and courteous manners and customs and artistic instincts. But though she has kept her impatience at this false estimate of her powers in check, the error has rankled for many years.

Till quite recently, indeed, most Westerners have invariably confused the Chinese and the Japanese character, have been accustomed to consider them as almost synonymous. Not only is such a confusion galling to the Japanese, but, as the Irishman said, "is even more inaccurate than most inaccuracies of the kind." Although the differences of character between Japanese and Chinese are as marked as those existing between say the Moors and ourselves, they are seldom even nowadays recognised or understood, save by the comparative few who have studied the two races at first hand. The national virtues of the Japanese are as distinct from those of China as they are from those of modern Greece. Till comparatively recently artists frequently drew Japanese with pig-tails; and speakers and writers were accustomed to refer to Japan as an "opium country." And yet both these supposedly national characteristics are almost unknown in Japan, though the pig-tail and the opium habit dominate China.

To the fact also that the history of Japan has been in the past a sealed book to Western peoples, must be



A LITTLE SHRINE SET AMID A WEALTH OF GREEN.

TO VIMU  
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credited not a little of the misapprehension concerning the most significant characteristics of the Japanese. The history of the people affords a record of the development and cultivation of one of the highest and most noble of human qualities: and in this respect, Japan may well be regarded as standing side by side with the three ancient civilisations which have stood for so much in the world's history. For just as when the world was young Judea stood for the development of religious faith; just as Greece has stood throughout succeeding centuries for perfection in Art; just as Rome has stood for the supreme idea of Law—so has Japan been distinguished for something which has counted for much, and will in the future count for still more in the progress of the world. It is not the idea of religion, nor that of law; and though she has to a large extent the same artistic qualities and passionate sense of beauty which distinguished ancient Greece, it is not that, but the spirit of undying loyalty, which is the great underlying and inspiring element of national character; and with this, Japan's lesson to the world will be inseparably bound up.

The power of this factor in national life and development can only be appreciated when one considers that it has been the sentiment taught to and cherished by a strangely homogeneous people, who have lived under a single dynasty for twenty-five centuries, and has at last in process of time become not merely that, but a passion, and an integral part of their religion and national life. The fact, too, must be considered, that not once in that long space of time has the foot of an invader trodden the soil of Japan. In the glorious and to most Westerners unknown history of its race, every Japanese child is deeply versed. Over the many deeds of dauntless bravery, chivalry, and patriotism of the past, the children of each succeeding generation have pored, drinking in the



spirit which was the animating force of such deeds—the *Yamato Damashii*, or “Soul of Japan.”

Then, added to this, there is the influence, subtle but nevertheless powerful, which a country so strangely beautiful must of necessity exercise upon its inhabitants. And last, but not least, there has been during centuries of seclusion and peace the opportunity of cultivating the things which make for mutual refinement, courtesy, and kindness, all of which serve to attach the individual to the State, and call into being that spirit of national patriotism which, when the crucial test comes, will not generally be found wanting.

There is, we know, a theory that great nations can only grow out of a series of great crises. And it well might be thought that the long seclusion of Japan, and the unbroken peace of her later history down to the date of the war with China, would lead rather to weakness than strength. But, as in so many other things in Japan, the exception must be held to prove the rule. For the student of Japanese history finds that, notwithstanding the peace and seclusion of nearly three centuries, the strong virtue of courage and patriotism has neither died nor even languished, but has in a measure gained strength and fire. So that when the need for its exercise arose, the lofty spirit of chivalry was brought into instant being, recalling in many of the deeds which it inspired the knightly legends of old Japan, and the unswerving courage of ancient times.

This extraordinary quality of patriotism, which it has been well said Japan possesses in a degree without an existing modern parallel; in a degree that makes it impossible to convey a correct idea of its power and significance by the mere word patriotism, is the actuating motive and factor in the evolution of modern Japan from the almost legendary country of feudal and earlier times.

The fact that the sources of her history, even though purely mythological, are held sacred, not from a religious but from a patriotic motive, has also left its mark upon history itself and national character. By a strange and seemingly perverted reasoning, whilst the more educated Japanese undoubtedly decline to accept the legends of the gods, they do not reject the almost equally mythical stories of the early Emperors.

Thus it is, that although religion may be the sufferer from the non-acceptance of ancient records, no Japanese ever permits a shadow of doubt to be cast on the *bona-fides* of what is the most ancient dynasty in the world, nor is a whisper permitted which may be considered in the slightest degree to detract from the reverence which should be paid to its reigning and living representative. But this spirit, which at once crushes any expression or even thought of scepticism regarding the forerunners of the Mikado's dynasty, is not an evidence (as it might be with a Western people) of fear, or the expression of political expediency; it is but another side of the patriotism of the Japanese race.

For this reason, so far as we are aware, not a single voice was raised when the editor of a Tōkyō paper some years ago was imprisoned for speaking slightly, not of the Mikado, but of the mythical Jimmu Tenno, who is accredited with having founded the present dynasty of Japan more than two thousand five hundred years ago! Love of the Emperor is recognised by every man, woman, and child in Japan as not only a national duty, but as a national privilege.

In quite recent years several missionaries have been treated with severity, and an intolerance which is strangely foreign to the Japanese nature, because they merely ventured to hint that they hoped for the conversion of the Mikado; a wish which was naturally construed by his

subjects into an expression that their sacred ruler, "Tenshi Sama" or "the Son of Heaven," was wrong.

The Emperor's aspirations for his land are those of the humblest of his subjects; his sorrows are theirs; his wishes are their unbreakable laws. Thus it was that when the Czarewich was attacked some years ago at Otsu by a Japanese fanatic, a young girl killed herself on hearing of the Mikado's distress; leaving behind her a letter addressed to the Government expressing her earnest hope that the Emperor might be asked to sorrow no more, as she had given her young life—though a humble one—in expiation of the crime committed.

So, too, would most Japanese—nay, all, if asked what would be their greatest ambition, say in reply, "to die for Tenshi Sama."

This spirit of extraordinary loyalty, however, which has existed throughout the ages, has not been, at least in the past, inspired (as might be supposed) chiefly by affection for the Mikado's person. For, truth to tell, many of the rulers of Japan have possessed little in their personal characters to inspire either affection or enthusiasm; and, indeed, have in feudal times been so isolated from personal contact with their subjects at large, that they have been to most little more than regal abstractions, in whose persons, however, has dwelt the dignity and power which has descended upon them in an unbroken line for twenty-five centuries. With the present Mikado, an element of personal regard has become possible from his progressive policy, and the innovations which he has from time to time made with the view of getting into more intimate touch with his people.

Another extraordinary circumstance in connection with the evolution of the Japanese character and race, is the fact that, whilst the nation was by some mysterious power kept a virile and patriotic people through the enervating





TO THESE TEMPLES COME A SUCCESSION OF WORSHIPPERS.

to view  
document



centuries of the "Long Peace," its nominal rulers have on many occasions sunk to the lowest depths of degeneracy. During nearly ten centuries the reins of power were held by ambitious nobles, chief amongst whom have been the Fujiwara, the Raira, the Minamoto, the Ashikaga, the Hōjō, and the Tokugawa, whose principal interest and aim it was always to curb the power of the Mikado, or so to control the succession that the throne was occupied by a child or a weakling.

But, notwithstanding this, those who vested in themselves the real power always had to reckon with the popular devotion to the "Emperor idea," and to shape their policy accordingly; and, however powerful a feudal lord has in the past become, or however over-mastering his ambition (unlike what has frequently occurred in other countries), in Japan it has never been possible for him to attain the supreme power, to actually reign or to found a rival dynasty. Each law promulgated has had to carry the impression of emanating from the Mikado himself, who, though formerly and, indeed, till quite recent times, kept in the closest seclusion, has ever dwelt in the hearts of his people, and has been deemed the source of all authority. In this set of circumstances one has an explanation of the otherwise perplexing accounts of the existence of spiritual and temporal Emperors reigning contemporaneously, which are given by early travellers and voyagers, and also of the dual government of the Mikado and Shogun.

Remembering these facts, the present ruler of Japan's progressive, reforming, and virile qualities are not the least remarkable things in the history of his nation. By a strange poetic justice the crime of the centuries committed by the nobles of the past upon the persons of their Emperors seems to have recoiled upon their own heads, and nowadays the effeminacy to which the Mikados of

the past were doomed by the feudal lords seems to have overtaken the *daimio*, who alone of the Japanese of to-day are lacking in virile qualities. And precisely the same policy which was adopted by the Shoguns in regard to their Emperor was in turn used by their own chief retainers against them; with the result that the name of *daimio* at last became a synonym for effeminacy and degeneracy, and the nobles themselves only pawns in the hands of their own clansmen.

It was also through these *samurai* or retainers of the great lords, and by reason of their undying love of country, that one of the most chivalrous and self-sacrificing acts of devotion to their native land and Emperor was brought about—an act that has undoubtedly contributed more than any other to the foundation of the great Eastern Empire as we find it to-day. No deed in history stands out with greater suggestiveness and dramatic significance than the relinquishment of all the feudal claims, which had been acquired and built up through the centuries, to the Imperial rule by those whose first thought had hitherto been loyalty to their clan.

The act by which the great clans of Hizen, Chosiu, Satsuma, and Tosa gave up in March 1869, at the restoration of the monarchy, all their possessions to the Emperor, forms one of the most astonishing in the history of any nation.

In the document in which their various possessions were set forth occur amongst other things the following pronouncements: "The heaven and earth (by which is meant Japan) are the Emperor's, and there is no man who is not his retainer. In olden times it was the Imperial wisdom which governed all, and there was prosperity. But in the Middle Ages the meshes of the net were broken, so that men, who played with the great Strength and strove for power, crushed the Emperor's power and

stole his land. . . . Thus it came to pass that the Emperor was a vain title, and empty of power, and the Shogun's government was looked up to as the giver of joy or sorrow. During this period the Shogun borrowed the Emperor's name and authority, and used the former to blind the people. Now the great government (the restoration of the whole empire to Imperial rule) has been newly restored, and the Emperor himself has undertaken the conduct of affairs. This is indeed a mighty event. We now have the Imperial government in name; it remains for us to make it a fact. Our first duty will be to prove and exemplify our loyalty. . . . The place where we dwell is the land of the Emperor, and the food even that we eat is grown by the men of the Emperor. How is it possible for us to make it our own? We now willingly and with reverence yield up a list of our possessions and men. Let the Emperor issue orders for the altering and reforming of the territories hitherto held by the various clans. . . . Let the civil, penal, and military codes of laws all proceed from him. Let all affairs of the Empire, whether they be great or trivial, be referred to him: and then will Japan be able to take its place beside the other great nations of the world. . . ."

Then followed an appeal to the Emperor himself to take upon his shoulders the responsibilities of power, concluding with these significant words: "Thus it is that we dare to offer up our humble petition and expression of undying loyalty, upon which we pray that the effulgence of the heavenly sun may shine, and are ready to lay down our lives in proof of our good faith."

The example of the great clans was followed almost immediately by other and lesser ones; and in the end no less than two hundred and forty-one, out of two hundred and seventy-six, had begged to restore their fiefs to the Emperor. The feudal system, which had for so many



centuries dominated Japan, to the weakening of the Imperial power and undoubtedly to the detriment of national progress, was in the course of a few months swept away, and Japan emerged, almost as though by magic, an Empire in deed as well as name.

The lesson of centuries has been well learned ; and the *samurai* class, always distinguished for stability, courage, and loyalty to those in authority, had stood the supreme test of yielding up rights gained by centuries of evolution, and Japan, as we now know it, was created. A marvel truly to all save those who have read her history deeply and aright.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RELIGION OF JAPAN, AND THE CONFLICT OF FAITHS

**I**N nothing does Japan differ from most other great nations more than in its religion or faith of the people. In the case of almost every civilised race the prevailing religious belief which they now hold is of exotic growth, having little or nothing to do with the national life, and playing a very unimportant part in national growth. The one remarkable exception to this rule in ancient times was that of the Jewish people, with whom, indeed, their national life and religious belief was so closely allied as to be almost indistinguishable. In the literature of their race it is frequently difficult at first to realise whether the spiritual or the national is being referred to. And it is probable that the extraordinary patriotism and loyalty of the individual to the race to which he belongs, which appears on every page of Jewish history, is attributable to this fact. There is, indeed, something approaching the sublime in the record of the Hebrews, who, owning not a foot of their native land nationally, scattered in all parts of the inhabitable world, persecuted, distrusted, and disliked, still proclaim their undying, inextinguishable belief that they are God's chosen people, and amidst all difficulties, in spite of all discouragement, still exist as an example of a strangely distinct and wonderfully homogeneous people.

In the national faith of Japan, the ancient Shintō faith,



which has survived all the trying vicissitudes of former and modern times, and has resisted all efforts of alien creeds to supplant it, one finds the one other religion which is pre-eminent for its patriotism. In Japan it remains to-day not merely the real faith of the Japanese as a whole, but the embodiment of the loyalty of the people to the motherland; consolidating the national life and ambitions as no other influence could do. It is for this reason that there can be but one answer to the inquiry, "What is the religion of the Japanese?"

It is true that many Japanese are Buddhists, and not a few are Confucianists, but all are Shintōists; for the Shintō faith is not merely the State religion, but part and parcel of the spirit and life of every inhabitant of the Mikado's empire. Religion and patriotism are with them, as with the Jews, indissoluble. There are a few adherents amongst the Japanese, more especially in the towns, of various types of the Christian faith; but no alien religion has really taken root in Japan, and certainly none has become identified in any way with the national life.

With regard to matters relating to the blending of religion and patriotism, the Hebrews and the Japanese are strangely alike. But how immeasurably different have been their destinies! The first, with not a vestige of empire remaining, still dominates the chief civilised nations by means of its religion, astounding acuteness and intelligence, and the material wealth of individuals. The second, with the tenets of her religious faith scarcely known to the people of other nations, has come to be regarded as one of the greatest and most progressive powers of modern times.

The Shintō faith, which forms so unique an example of the survival untouched through the ages of a primitive religion, however deserves attention, not alone for that reason. For it is interesting also because of its general

tendency, as well as because its tenets are so opposite to those of more Western civilisations.

In modern times one has heard in our own land the assertion oft repeated by preachers of all denominations, that whilst the outward seeming of religion flourishes very much as of yore, a great deal that is most vital—the heart and life of religion—has declined. In Japan, by some strange working of fate and the development of the human mind, the essence of the Shintō worship is still the most vital force in the nation's life, though many of the ancient shrines are sadly deserted, and the outward evidence of the prevalence of religion is almost entirely lacking. And although its theological traditions are openly and entirely discredited, and the acts of worship (where performed) are recognised as the outcome of pure ceremonialism, yet the heart of the Shintō faith remains the mainspring of the nation, from which is derived its astonishing and immutable loyalty.

In the Shintō faith as it is recognised to-day, we find something far more profound and far-reaching in its effects than the survival of mere tradition or ceremonialism. It stands for character in the highest and best sense; courage, honour, courtesy, and above all, the spirit of unswerving loyalty. The foundations of Shintōism are compact of filial piety, the zest for the performance of duty, and the willingness, which has been often evidenced of late years to the whole world, of individuals to lay down even life itself for a principle without hesitation or demur, or inquiry as to the reason why such a supreme sacrifice should be required. It is religion transformed or engrafted upon hereditary moral impulse, and translated into ethical instinct. In a word, it is the *Yamato Damashii*, or "Soul of Japan."

When one seeks for a reason for the unique patriotism of the Japanese race, it is not going too far to assign as

one cause the long period of isolation which, as a nation, Japan has undergone. And when one remembers the beautiful land in which the faith of the people has been fostered, and the worship of nature which forms an important feature of Shintō religion, one can understand how this may have easily developed into a sentient feeling of national pride, which there is, indeed, much in the exceptional conditions of Japanese life to encourage.

It must also be remembered that the Shintō faith is distinguished by its extraordinary unifying spirit. In it there are none of the controversial elements which play so important a part in most other creeds. In it there is nothing concerning which it is possible to quarrel! And perhaps for this reason many are inclined to dispute that it is a religion at all.

How strange, indeed, to most Western minds must appear a faith which is ruled by no set of dogmas, and possesses no infallible book; no semblance of a creed as it is generally understood, no sharply defined moral code, no idols, no distinct priesthood, and neither threat of punishment after death for those who err, or promise of joy for those who live good lives. One not unnatural result of this has been that the Japanese race has never been afflicted nor divided by wars of religion; and the attitude of the Japanese mind towards other faiths has been sympathetic if not acceptive. The missionary efforts of alien religions have invariably been received with courtesy and consideration at first. It has only been when the suspicion that these foreign propagandists might have ulterior and political motives likely to prove injurious to or subversive of the State that persecution has resulted. And although it has been stated to the contrary, it is perfectly safe to assert that the sword has never been drawn on any one solely because of his religious opinions.

But the power of the Shintō religion in stimulating the

[illegible]





A TORII BY THE SIDE OF SOME HILL-ENVIRONED LAKE.



spirit of patriotism which permeates and unifies Japanese life is not solely attributable to what may be termed its negative characteristics. Its positive virtues have also contributed their share in past times to this development.

That a faith which may be said to have been kept alive by the nation's state of isolation should present much that is mysterious to speculative Western minds is little to be wondered at, and many have been the attempts to range and define its positive elements. Some students and authorities have sought to attach to it the reproach of phallicism; whilst others have professed to trace the cult of hypnotism in its modern observances. But however much those who have thought deeply and given the greatest amount of research to the subject may differ upon some points, there are two upon which no such divergence of opinion exists. All are agreed that two of the most salient features of Shintō are nature worship and reverence for dead ancestors. Few influences could be found better calculated than these to inspire and build up love of and loyalty to such a land as Japan in a race so sensible to the influence of all that is beautiful as are the Japanese. Born to a heritage of wonderful beauty, it is little to be marvelled at that the people should have been inspired by it with a religious reverence for, and an almost fanatical and idolatrous abstract love of their native land itself.

The story of isolated nations as regards their great and outstanding patriotism has ever been the same. Holland guarded by her dykes, Switzerland by her mountains, the British Isles by their girdle of seas, have one and all been distinguished as lands where the love of country has been fostered until it has become almost a religion.

Much the same circumstances have affected the destinies of Japan. Here, where scenes of romantic and almost indescribable beauty are wedded to all the wilder and more

mystic elements of grandeur which comes from a volcanic origin, and where every valley, glade, crag, and cliff is clothed with the richest vegetation, it is little wonder that the spirit of the people has been influenced in the direction of a patriotism which has made that of most other nations sink into insignificance. Then the race itself is endued with a singular sense of beauty, which has made Nature-worship not merely a possible but a natural faith.

The outcome of this same Nature-worship is easily traceable in many ways. One must be familiar to all travellers in Japan. To them the *torii* or sacred arch or gateway may mean little or nothing. It is too common to long excite interest in the minds of the average traveller. To the Japanese, however, it means much.

In construction—whatever its materials may be, whether wood, stone, or metal—its form never varies. It consists of two columns or posts slightly inclined inwards, upon which is placed a horizontal cross-beam with projecting ends, beneath which is another beam having its ends fitted into the upright columns. Constructed of such simple materials, these always graceful *torii* yet exhibit in a remarkable degree the dexterity which is possessed by the Japanese for producing the most excellent results with the simplest of materials. These detached arches, which are found throughout Japan often in the most unexpected places, always span the path where it approaches sacred ground. But it differs from the consecrated portals of all other countries from the circumstance that it does not necessarily imply that it stands at the entrance to or near a temple. Over and over again it is discovered at the entrance to a mountain path or set in the deep and silent glades of a wood. Sometimes it appears on the shores of a lake quite close to the water's edge; at others in a clump of bushes or trees amidst the wide and monotonous expanse of the rice-fields; at others on the bluff of a cliff, or at the

entrance to a cavern. If one explores when it is found at the beginning of a path and follows the latter, one is led sometimes, it is true, to a temple—often almost deserted, sometimes falling into abject decay; but more frequently the path beyond the *torii* leads but to a primitive shrine, in which nothing will be discoverable. But it has its reason, for close by, if one searches, there will be found some suggestion for Nature-worship; it may be a tiny crystal stream, a gnarled tree-trunk once a magnificent forest giant, a grove of stately trees, or a lovely fern-clad rock of uncommon size and shape. These are the reasons for the tiny shrine, which was not built to receive an idol, but, as it were, to consecrate its beautiful environment.

And again, many a time the curious traveller who follows the path beneath the *torii* will at the end be greeted with neither temple nor shrine. The end of the path is some spot where a wide and lovely prospect is unfolded to the eye, a vision of beauty or impressive grandeur which is to the Japanese mind and heart more sacred than either.

It is—strange though it may seem—at such places that the Japanese find the true habitations of their religion, which, as we have sought to show, is more an intense love of Nature and a burning patriotism than a collection of dogmas or theological tenets. But though these two things form a great part of the Shintō faith they are not all. Were it so there would, indeed, be nothing in it to have prevented Japan experiencing a like fate to that which befell Greece, a country between whose life and that of Japan many interesting similarities can be traced. Were Shintōism merely Nature-worship, and had the religion of the Japanese race been purely and solely a form of æstheticism, the nation would doubtless have drifted into the effeminacy and degenerateness which proved the ruin of ancient Greece. But in it there was another



factor—a virile element, which has served to keep Japan true to the noblest form of patriotism, as well as inspired her with an overmastering love of country and loyalty. Without most of the outward elements which are commonly looked for in a religion, Shintōism possessed a great and lasting stimulus to duty, and has proved a wonderful character-builder.

It is in the ever loyal devotion to the memory and example of the dead, which is commonly called ancestor-worship, and in the sentiment and practice of filial obedience which Japan has recently shown, that the source of the strength and energy which has enabled her to accomplish so much in the hard-fought field and on the high seas must be looked for.

China first and then Russia (both unwieldy and corrupt) have learned to their cost how strong can be a nation, though astonishingly inferior numerically, when such a national faith as that of Japan has to be reckoned with.

In the case of the Japanese it may be said that their dead are always with them; not simply, as is the case with many other nations, in traditions of brave and knightly acts, and lingering memories of a past chivalry, but as though their forbears, whose deeds are enshrined in legend and story, are themselves reincarnated and present in the field to encourage their descendants of to-day in deeds of valour and self-sacrificing patriotism. In the mind of the Japanese soldier of whatever rank is the fixed and immutable idea present that all the heroes of his country's past—emperors, princes, chiefs, and leaders—as well as the revered and worshipped ancestors of his own household, look down and witness his deeds of valour.

It must, however, be remembered that this is not the sole element of national power which is derived by the Japanese from their national faith. For from out their reverence for the dead, and for the living as age creeps on,



has also sprung that astonishingly complete and unswerving obedience, which has made of the people a vast community of law-abiding and patriotic citizens, and of its army one of the most effective and well-organised forces of modern warfare. That from the Japanese youth of to-day should be evolved a loyal patriot and a magnificent soldier should cause little surprise when long years of unquestioning obedience to the elders of his family are remembered, backed up by centuries of similar discipline, under which his ancestors themselves learned the arts of war and the duty of the individual to the State.

It is not alone the vast resources of the Japanese nation which makes the study of this interesting and progressive people fascinating; but it is also the undreamt-of developments, which will probably be the outcome of the intense love of the fatherland, knit to many centuries of practice in filial piety and unswerving loyalty to the living symbol of power and the nation's great dead.

And thus the Shintō faith, though truly devoid of all the features generally associated with conventional religious beliefs, has yet in it the essentials of a true and time-enduring and even immutable faith, with a power to inspire a heart-whole patriotism, and ensure an unexampled faithfulness to national ideals and earnestness in life.

It is because of this—and because in love of their country and in unswerving loyalty to it the Japanese are undivided—that this faith, which they share with the early Greeks and Romans, but which they alone amongst the civilised nations have been able to keep alive and develop, has unified their ideals of life more completely than that of any other nation.

In Japan there is (as we have before said) but one true religion, the faith of Shintō, which has no stated commandments, and lives neither in books nor in rites—but in the heart of the Japanese people, of which it forms

the highest emotional religious sentiment and expression ; immortal, and ever new. And underlying all the array of curious and strange superstitions which lie upon its surface, and the simple myths and fantastical magic, there throbs an animating and magnificently potent spiritual force—the whole and entire soul of a patriotic race with all its motives and intuitions. And those who would comprehend either it or the race over which it holds so complete and in many ways so beneficent a sway, must get to know that mysterious thing, in which the sense of abstract beauty, the power of art, and the compelling force of an enduring loyalty and patriotism have become inborn, ever present and abiding.

But though the Shintō faith has survived almost unmodified for ages, and Japan has remained throughout the centuries immune from hostile invasion, she has been again and yet again subject to invasion by one power, which, though never able to destroy or supplant the ancient national faith, has nevertheless deeply affected and modified the social conditions and intellectual life of the nation.

Few countries, indeed, have escaped being subdued by the missionaries of some exotic religious faith, and in a limited sense such a fate has also been that of Japan. But the fact remains, that the various alien religions which have from time to time been introduced, and have even to a certain extent taken root within her confines, have failed to change in any essential respect the national faith, and thus it is possible for Japan to claim that she has held her unique record as the unconquerable by religious invasion, as she has held it in her entire exemption from successful physical attack. In almost all other lands invaded by alien religions, the ancient faiths have either entirely disappeared, or have become so deeply modified as to be ultimately almost unrecognisable. But in the

case of Japan this has not happened. Indeed, the reverse has proved the case, and rather has the alien faith been gradually, as it were, grafted upon the ancient one; and whilst the would-be proselytisers have been themselves converted, their own faith has become little more than an appendage of or supplementary to the ancient and only living religion of the Mikado's Empire.

So it still remains true that, although Japan has extended to teachers of alien creeds a frank and even open-handed hospitality, no very substantial number of converts have ever been made from the national faith of Shintōism. Buddhism and Confucianism have both in the past entered and endured in Japan, but it is nevertheless true that no Japanese on becoming attached to either of those faiths has ceased to be a Shintōist. Indeed, for one to have done so would have been regarded as an act of treachery to the nation and to the Imperial sway. Shintō and Buddhist temples may, in many instances, be found in Japan existing side by side, with the same priest officiating at and caring for both.

But although there is no scope for religious propagandists of alien creeds who do not at once recognise that the Shintō faith must, of necessity, remain supreme, the hospitality, which we have referred to as being extended to all, has only been withdrawn in one single instance, and then only when it had been glaringly abused.

It was because Confucianism when it entered Japan did so with neither idea of conquest nor fired with an ardent desire for conversions, that it was welcomed as something capable of adding to the nation's well-being. It was found to supply the code of morals with which Shintōism does not concern itself, but which were a necessary adjunct to the native faith, and in addition it gave sanction to the reverence for the aged and the departed, upon which the foundations of Shintōism rest.



Thus for three centuries, more as a system of learning and dogma than as a proselytising faith, it was made welcome, and flourished. Chiefly over the minds of the more learned and those of scholars, Confucianism undoubtedly attained a remarkable ascendancy, and during its sway the Shintō faith existed with it side by side, and from it derived a certain purifying grace which led to the abandonment of many of those superstitions and purely mystical elements which had during the ages become attached to Shintōism.

Buddhism, which reached Japan some time during the fifth century, was at first a much more militant invasion than that of Confucianism. But it was in the end destined to undergo the same process of adoption, for the Japanese were not slow to recognise Buddhism as possessing certain elements which were capable of strengthening and supplementing the deficiencies that undoubtedly existed in the native faith. This was (as we have seen) without dogma or established tenets, and these things Buddhism was capable of supplying.

This new religion, which rivals that of Rome itself in the impressive ornateness of its services and the splendour lavished upon its decorative embellishments, ultimately gave to Shintōism (which lacked these distinctive features) a new life; and to the culture of the nation's sense of beauty a new incentive and trend. Buddhism, which has been received and adopted by the Turanian races alone, just as the Christian faith has made progress chiefly amongst nations of the Aryan family, was welcomed by the Japanese, and found a congenial soil in which to strike its roots. But, notwithstanding this, and the fact that the great majority of the Japanese are nominally professing Buddhists, this alien faith, that it might survive, had ultimately to adapt itself to the ancient one of the Japanese people. It is true that Buddhism is nowadays in evidence



throughout Japan as the faith of the common people, but it is equally certain that by its acceptance they have never contemplated the abjuration of their ancient and truly national religion. The only way in which Buddhism was able to ensure for itself even a nominal ascendancy was by the taking into its own pantheon the whole of the Shintō gods, and by inducing the belief that it was only another form of the old faith which had held its place in the heart and life of the nation for so many centuries.

There was a re-naming of the deities which the Japanese had always held in reverence ; and the festivals which had grown dear to them were associated with the days consecrated to Buddhist saints. The means taken were subtle, but by such as we have indicated was the alien faith offered to and made acceptable in the eyes of the Japanese people.

Buddhism itself made great concessions, and upon it were brought to bear all the influences of Japanese patriotism, which were gradually and surely assimilated. But the old faith remained unaltered in all essentials. Profoundly as the alien religion in many respects affected Japanese life and character—providing new impulses to the æsthetic life of the people, adding new and picturesque features to national customs, and giving a new and strengthened code of morals—the alien faith itself passed through still greater transmutations. The religious invasion, which had apparently many prospects of ultimate success and triumph over the older faith, was destined to fail as a propagandist force. It brought with it a system of pessimistic philosophy, and for nearly fifteen centuries it had every facility for inculcating its doctrines ; but the people it sought to teach have remained amongst the most optimistic and happy-dispositioned in the world. It provided them with the ideas of a heaven and a hell by means of dogmas and pictures ; but the Japanese have

never accepted these ideas. Its teaching of a gospel of peace and gentleness of life was accepted, until the necessity for war came to prove how futile fourteen centuries of such teaching had been. Thus it will be seen, that Buddhism, with all its unbounded opportunities to affect the life of the Japanese people deeply, yet has left *Yamato Damashii*—"the innermost Soul of Japan"—unchanged, in all essentials surviving to-day the same as that evolved by the influence of Shintōism. It is safe to say that now, as in the past, the real religious faith of the Japanese is to be summed up in loyalty to their native land and enthusiasm for its glory and progress; and that the highest conception of the race, regarding religious duty, is that of dying (if necessary) for their Ruler.

Just as the apparent success and actual acclimatising of Buddhism was accomplished by a discreet assimilation of various essential features of the Shintō faith, so later on was the transitory success of the Jesuit missionaries won in the sixteenth century. The Goddess of Mercy (Kwannon) needed but slight modification to serve as the Virgin Mary, and equally skilful and astute adaptations of the new faith to the old or *vice versâ* were made, with the result that the Jesuit missionaries seemingly gained a firm foothold in Japan, and for a time numerous converts.

It must, however, be added that these latter knew little or nothing of the principles or doctrines of the alien religion they embraced other than those which seemed so largely in accord with the Shintō faith of their forbears. And when, at the end of the seventeenth century, the Catholic converts had to face the fiercest of persecutions, by which the Western religion was ultimately swept from the land, their constancy was in most cases far more traceable to the spirit of loyalty to the princes and nobles who themselves had been converted than to any personal



A TORII OFTEN MERELY MARKS A BEAUTIFUL SPOT, AND DOES  
NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO A SHRINE.





enthusiasm for the new religion itself. That this is a rational explanation is borne out by several authorities who provide direct testimony. With few exceptions most of the converts were peasants, who knew little more of the religion they had been persuaded to adopt than the mere names of the Virgin Mary and Christ.

Since the close of the seventeenth century, when with fire and sword and much spilling of blood the Roman Catholic faith was uprooted and driven out of every corner of the Japanese Empire, there have been—more especially during the last thirty years—several religious invasions. Of all the exotic faiths which various bodies of missionaries have sought to introduce, there can be little doubt that the Jesuits (for the same reasons which assisted the success of their forerunners) have met with the most marked success. But all missionaries, on account of the complete ruin which overtook the proselytising enterprises of three hundred years ago, and the extreme execration in which the mere names of Catholic and Christian were held until after the middle of the last century, are even nowadays faced by almost insurmountable difficulties. In the case of Catholic missionary effort there is the additional obstacle of the acknowledgment of the supremacy of the Pope, which by most Japanese would be regarded as an unthinkable breach of loyalty to their own Ruler. These things have served to create in the minds of both nobles and peasants a great distrust of the Roman Catholic propagandists; and there still lives in the hearts of the people a disquieting suspicion that the triumph of this Western religion and the religious ascendancy of Rome might possibly lead to a political subjection of their nation. In the past this was the fear which suddenly turned a hospitable people, with a policy of tolerance towards an alien religion, into relentless persecutors; and those who know Japan of to-day are agreed that in this

respect there has been little or no real change in the heart of the Japanese. Any triumphs that may be won by Rome (and some success has undoubtedly crowned her efforts) bear with them the ever-living risk of the same catastrophe overtaking both missionaries and converts as that which wiped out the Western faith three centuries ago.

But nevertheless, and in the face of the obstacles we have referred to, all other Christian missionaries put together are scarcely as successful as the single body of Jesuits. The reason is not far to seek. They are propagandists of creeds which are neither capable of nor willing to make concessions to the ancient national faith. Two thousand years' discipline in the school of loyalty has largely made the Japanese character what it is, and is a factor the potency of which the Jesuits of the past recognised and of the present day frankly admit, and with which they have endeavoured to cope. The Protestant Christian missionaries, on the other hand, have seemingly chosen rather to ignore it.

There is yet another factor which works against the subjection of the Japanese to a form of Christian faith. In the past they have ever been willing to adopt anything which would in any way conduce to the prosperity, advancement, or well-being of the race or nation. And it was in pursuance of this that some thirty years ago special Commissions were sent to the most civilised countries to investigate and report upon their educational, naval, judicial, military, and industrial systems. A special Commission was also appointed to inquire into the pros and cons of Christianity as a possible State religion for the Japanese, and to report whether such adoption would be in the interests of the moral advancement of the people. Little as a Western writer may care to refer to the result

of the investigations of that Commission, we are bound to put on record that the report was against the adoption of the Christian faith, upon the grounds that the moral condition of the peoples professing Christianity was not such as to inspire in the minds of the Commissioners any high opinion of the power of such faith to mould public opinion or raise the moral standard of life. It also went on to say that Christianity as an influence towards right living and purity did not appear to possess the potency of the faiths which had so long held dominion over the hearts of the Japanese people. Into the question of the entire justice or otherwise of the conclusions arrived at by the Commission we cannot enter here ; but the fact of their opinion, which was certainly well considered, remains ; and should be taken into account when the success or non-success of Christian missionaries is under discussion or consideration.

What the result might have been had those in authority sent forth to investigate the claims of Christianity been able to come to a different conclusion, it is not easy to tell. But this much may be said, that in such an event the instinctive loyalty of the people would have ensured at least a fruitful soil for missionary effort, instead of, as is the case, an increase in an already existing antagonism to Christian propaganda.

At the present time the prospects of the missionary field are not encouraging if a broad, unbiassed, and unclouded view be taken. And to all the obstacles we have already mentioned must be added the well-known and indisputable fact that religious proselytising has always been confined within racial limits. Christianity only really flourishes amongst the races of the Aryan family ; Buddhism, on the other hand, has (if one except small portions of the land in which it had birth) only been accepted by



Turanian peoples; whilst Mohammedanism is confined to the Semitic peoples, save for a portion of India where its triumph was ensured at the point of the sword.

A writer, whose knowledge of the Japanese race (seeing he was a Western) is probably almost, if not quite, unique, long ago said that Christendom has never in modern times been able to ensure the acceptance of its doctrines and dogmas upon a people able to sustain any hope of a national existence. And it is this hope of a national existence, of national glory and success, stimulated by patriotic pride and an undying love of native land, that will, at least so far as can yet be seen, ensure Japan's immunity from successful invasion, either physical or religious.

But it should not be supposed that the Japanese nation, which has undoubtedly received and accepted many benefits in the shape of educational, philanthropic, and social work from the various missionaries who have come and dwelt within its borders during the last thirty-five years, is ungrateful or unmindful of these benefits. They are not. And, indeed, a people so hospitable, so naturally tolerant and so happy, could scarcely be guilty of ingratitude where acknowledgment should be made. But they view not alone unsympathetically, but with even a marked hostility, all missionary efforts which make for the belittling of their patriotism and loyalty, or which concern themselves chiefly with denunciations as idolatry of the simple, natural, and in a measure beautiful ancestor-worship and reverence which in the past has had so much to do with the evolution of the national character, and, indeed, forms the basis of Japanese morality.

It is not too much to say, in view of all the facts and historical precedents which confront one, that the system of Christianity which gains a permanent hold upon Japanese soil, or exercises any real or lasting influence upon the life of the people and upon the Island Empire, will be neither







A PAGODA WHICH HAS STOOD A THOUSAND YEARS.

Baptist nor Methodist, Church of England nor Church of Scotland, Unitarian nor Roman Catholic. Nor, indeed, will it be even English, American, German, Italian, nor of any other nationality. But, if ever such a thing should come to pass, the form of it will be essentially Japanese, based upon and assimilated with the old national faith and beliefs, and above all compact of patriotism, loyalty, and an undying love of native land.

## CHAPTER III

### BUDDHIST AND SHINTŌ TEMPLES, AND ANCIENT SHRINES

THE temples of Japan, although to Western eyes lacking in height and the type of impressiveness which comes from it, are yet of great and even abiding interest from an architectural and æsthetic point of view. Prevented, by reason of the frequency of earthquake shocks, from erecting a type of building which would owe much of its grandeur to its height, and compelled for that reason to keep their temples at a low elevation, the ingenuity of the Japanese architects and builders has been concentrated in the endeavour to compensate in some measure for the comparative insignificance of the elevation by the careful selection of the site, and the spaciousness of the approaches. Thus it is that almost invariably their environments in Japan are beautiful and picturesque, wonderfully suggestive of that inherent and almost idolatrous love of Nature which has with the Japanese become their religion. The approaches, too, are seldom without stateliness and an impression of spaciousness. To these characteristics, indeed, both the universal *torii*, mysterious and so significant of the spirit of the race and of its worship, and the long rows of *ishidōrō* (stone lanterns) lend themselves; and the dominating outlines and mass of the giant cryptomerias, which so generally lead up to or are found surrounding the shrine, do much to remove any sense of architectural deficiency



which might otherwise be produced by the absence of dome, tower, or arresting spire.

Many temples in the large towns and cities, where there is a crowded population and a necessity for economy of space, lack the imposing approaches of more fortunately situated shrines; but even then one finds a compensating element in the contrast which appears between the massive architecture of the temple buildings and the fragile houses by which they are environed. The low-roofed temple, though of much the same elevation and general character as the houses which surround it, still stands out with distinction by reason of its beautiful and elaborate carvings and lacquer work, or its entrance gate, and walls, and eaves; the wider sweep of its gracefully curved roof, and the solidity of its construction.

The main endeavour of succeeding generations of temple architects has been to build for time, to devise a type of structure which would be beautiful, and yet offer as little challenge to "the Dragon which writhes in the Earth" as possible. How successful their efforts have been may be judged from the beauty of many of the temples and the age to which some have attained.

Even the taller pagodas which are familiar objects of many a Japanese landscape, and are apparently built in defiance of earthquake shocks, have many of them survived countless attacks. One of the oldest is the famous Yasuka pagoda in Kyōtō, which has withstood seismic disturbances for upwards of ten centuries. This structure may be taken as typical of others less famous and smaller. These pagodas appear to have been purely ornamental structures, and for this reason the provision of internal space was of no moment. The interior is therefore generally a mass of huge timbers, braced in every direction, and leaving only the smallest well-like space unoccupied. In this is hung a huge pendulum, the object of which is to

swing the centre of gravity into place during an earthquake shock, and thus prevent the building being overthrown. The immense strength of the materials used in the construction of the pagoda, and the elaborate and scientific system of bracing of the beams, guarantees the erection from destruction by piecemeal collapse.

It is to Nikkō, the home of the gods, the last resting-place of ancient saints, that all who would see the temples of Japan in their completeness of beauty and magnificence must come. Here, too, is the most sacred bridge in all Japan, which spans the rapidly flowing Daiya-gawa. By a single arch it connects the two sides of the river, and painted a bright red, when seen in sunlight forms a brilliant note of colour in dazzling contrast to the dark green cryptomerias on the banks. Its name *Mi-hashī* (the Bridge) is a simple tribute to its importance in Japanese minds, for it is built on the spot where the sacred Shō-dō Shō-nin crossed the river by the miraculous bridge, which shone like a rainbow floating amongst the hills, built for him by a great god of two snakes, one green and one blue. When the saint had crossed the bridge, and it and its maker vanished from sight, Shō-do Shō-nin built himself a cell, where he dwelt for some time and practised his devotions, and afterwards erected the first Buddhist temple at Nikkō. Nowadays only the Mikado himself is permitted to traverse *Mi-hashī*; formerly the Shoguns and pilgrims were permitted to cross it, the latter on two days in each year.

The temples of Nikkō are many, and their beauty of almost indescribable charm. But it was the burial there of the three great Shoguns—Iyeyasu, Iyemitsu, and Yorimoto at Nikkō, amidst the Mountains of the Sun's Brightness, that has had much to do with Nikkō's fame both ancient and modern.

To the shrine of Iyeyasu, along the far-stretching

avenue of giant cryptomerias, each year come pilgrims of all stations in life, prince and peasant, priest and penitent, to gaze upon the sacred red bridge by which the artistic soul of their wonderful race linked up the beauties of the smoke-blue hills, the tree-clad gorge, and the rushing grey-green Daiya-gawa.

From the end of the bridge the avenue of cryptomerias ascends the foot of the hill till it loses itself in the wide, gravelled plateau before the temple-gate. Two mythical lions, heavily gilded and lacquered, guard the first gate beneath the granite *torii*, above which is the *baku* (tapir) with four ears and nine tails, which is supposed to possess the power of overcoming pestilence of all kinds, and to eat up all bad dreams! In the first courtyard are grouped all the minor buildings of the temple, including the beautifully decorated library, containing the two thousand *sutras*—a complete collection—of the Buddhist scriptures; the stable of the sacred white pony (for the use of the god), with its wonderful carvings of monkeys under the roof; the interesting On-chodzu-ya, with its holy-water cistern cut out of a solid block of granite, with the inflow of the water from the So-men-daki cascade, which lies behind the hill, so nicely adjusted that each side of the tank overflows to an exactly equal extent, giving the effect of a solid block of water, instead of masonry. All these buildings are marvels of architectural embellishment; so rich and splendid, indeed, in carving and design, and so brilliant in harmonising colouring, that Western eyes are at first bedazzled by the sight, and Western minds confused by the lavish nature of their symbolic and mystical decorations. Separating the temple from its environment of towering, sombre cryptomerias, is a crimson lacquered fence, positively covered with coloured carvings, and full of historic and antiquarian interest.

The second courtyard, which is reached by a flight of



granite steps, is almost square. In it stand the bronze lantern of the King of Korea; the candelabrum of the King of Loochoo; and one given by the Dutch (all tributary gifts); as well as the famous "Moth-eaten Bell"; innumerable other bronze lanterns sent by long dead *daimio* of old Japan as offerings, which have defied the heat of summer and snow of winter for more than two centuries; and the curious drum and bell towers, rather like dice-boxes, which are found in most important Buddhist temples. Outside the lacquered fence, and in gloomy and impressive contrast to it, rise the dark trunks of the silent, green pines.

Yet another flight of granite steps, running between crimson friezes rich with coloured carvings, leads from the sombre hues of the grey stone pedestals and green-grey bronze lanterns of the second courtyard to the third, in which stands the most exquisite gateway in all the world—the Yomei-mon, a double gateway of cream-white lacquer, supported by four pillars of carved wood. One of these, known as *mayoke no hashira* (evil-averting pillar), was erected upside down by the builders, in quaint superstitious awe lest the absolute perfection of the gate and temple should make the gods in heaven jealous, and thus cause them to pour down wrath upon the house of Tokugawa. The carving of this wonderful gateway cannot be described in detail. It would require almost a little volume to itself. On the pillars appear representations of tigers and cubs, with the grain of the wood ingeniously applied to form the markings; arabesques; and more or less conventional designs; and in the side niches are patterns of graceful adaptations of the tree peony. Dragons, children at their game of *Karako-asobi*, Chinese sages, Rishi, all play their part in the bewildering designs which make the Yomei-mon not only unique but magnificent. And above all the carving and elegance





UP THE GREY, LICHEN-STAINED STEPS TO THE  
TEMPLE GATE.



is the demon-crowned roof supported by gilded dragons' heads.

In this marvellous gateway one has the riotous profusion of carving and design which distinguishes the ornamentation of many of the Japanese temples; growing, glowing flowers; sculptured birds and beasts; hanging, tinkling lotus bells; and yet a perfect whole of mysterious and elusive beauty. The temple, with its *torii*, its court-yards, its flights of steps, its wonderful balustradings, its shrines, its gateways, its crimson fence with thousands of carvings, was, after all, only the work of forty years from first stone to last pinnacle. And yet the carving in the Yomei-mon alone might well have been the life-work of many artists.

Beyond the great white gate is the beautiful building in which are housed the three *mekoshi*, or sacred cars or palanquins, which are borne in procession on the 1st of June in each year, when the deified spirits of Japan's three ancient and greatest warriors—Iyeyasu, Hideyoshi, and Yoritomo—are supposed to descend to earth and occupy them. Another flight of steps must be ascended ere the sacred enclosure known as the Tama-gaki is reached, which measures fifty yards each way, and is environed by a lofty gilt fence beautiful with elaborate carvings of birds. It is this enclosure which is entered by the Karamon gate, white and gold and exquisite, known as the Chinese gate, and only less beautiful than the Yomei-mon because it is so much smaller; and within it stands the *hai-den* or oratory, and the *hon-den* or chapel; these the summit of Japanese gilder's art, and the glory of the place. None can enter here shod. On the floor beyond is some of the finest lacquer the world has seen, and with this knowledge it is difficult to declare with certainty whether one must be barefoot because of reverence of the sacred shrine or of the marvellous lacquer. But,

lest the worshipper who treads the stone flags barefoot, or the more devout who approach the shrine on their knees, should suffer harm, and contract rheumatism from the pavement in wet weather, a shed, rough-made, and of the most common materials, extends from the writhing dragons which stretch on either hand between the door-post and the pillar to the beautiful canopy or roof of the Chinese gate. Its incongruousness strikes one sharply; but it serves an artistic purpose, for it enhances the grace of the gateway and the splendour of the shrine. Inside is the temple of the memorial tablets, where with elaborate rites Buddhist priests for three centuries prayed for the soul of Iyeyasu.

To-day the Buddhist emblems are gone and the shrine is bare.

Outside, notwithstanding its wonderful roof, multiplicity of carved figures, strange black gallery, gables gilt and coloured, the shrine is more or less disfigured by the boards which have been nailed on it to prevent the ravages of wind and weather, now that the vast sums formerly needed and spent for its upkeep are no longer forthcoming. All the splendour is nowadays in its interior walls, its brilliant gold lacquer, its rich blue ceiling, its *hon-den*, with the gilded doors closed and mysterious, with nothing to be seen save the *gohei* of silk or gilt paper, and the paintings of the thirty-six great Japanese poets. And yet, strange to say, the tomb of Iyeyasu is not here, but lies above and beyond the temple. It is reached by a long flight of two hundred grey-green granite steps climbing up the sombre hillside. Thirteen years of toilsome labour lies locked in the quarrying and placing of this flight of broad stone steps; which ascend amidst the dark pines, and are in due season lit with the flaming foliage of interspersed maples, until the temple roof, the sound of the prayer-bell, and the murmur of chant are all at last lost to sight and hearing.



Before this happens, however, the Goma Dō is reached, where priests in white robes sit for the purpose of selling copies of the "Wise Counsel of Iyeyasu," either in the form of *kakemono*, or printed in facsimile of the saint's handwriting upon sheets of silky-surfaced paper. And from these same priests the faithful and the curious can obtain little prayers in red ink, printed on tissue paper and pasted to a piece of card, which those who are too ignorant—or shall one say too lazy—to master the proper form of words to make supplication may deposit in lieu of the uttered prayer, without misgivings as to the effectiveness of the substitute. In the Kagura Dō hard by is the woman, old and unlovely, who dances the sacred *kagura* dance, which is graceful, as are all Japanese dances, and consists chiefly of swaying motions of the body.

At the summit of the hill is a curving group of elegant and stately pine trees, whose straight-growing trunks gleam red in the sunlight and contrast with the sombre green of their branches. Isolated and apparently deserted stands the tomb of the great Iyeyasu, and at first this shrine of light-hued bronze—whose colour betokens that gold was used in the alloy of which it is made—seems in shape not unlike a modern round English pillar-box with a somewhat exaggerated "mushroom" top; and about half-way up its height is a recess closed by two small doors, behind which rests the urn containing the ashes of the great dead. It is surrounded by a low stone wall with a balustrade, in which is a bronze door to serve as its gateway. In front of the tomb, standing on a low stone table, is a bronze stork, with a candle placed in its bill and a tortoise beneath its feet; and a bronze vase, with a lotus, also of metal, standing in it. Simple accompaniments and decorations these, many will doubtless say; but nevertheless full of deep significance, for the tortoise and the stork are emblems of the immortality which invests the names of

the nation's great ones. This, then, is all. Amid the silence of the hills, a stillness only disturbed when the winds play sweet, weird music in the pine branches, above the dazzling splendour and bewildering artistry of the great temple, lies the shrine-tomb and the ashes of the great prince Iyeyasu.

To those who know his history there will appear a clear but nevertheless strange significance in all this; and the progressive grandeur of the temple and its approaches down the hillside, and final solitude and simplicity of Iyeyasu's tomb, are but emblematic of his life. He climbed the earthly ladder of fame into a dazzling splendour of position and reputation, just as by progressive stages the beauty of the great temple down the hillside is approached; and then he shed gradually its glories and pomp of circumstance as his soul climbed upward, till at last, surmounting all earthly things, it entered the great Silence. Thus is the story of the hero written in imperishable form in the great temple of Nikkō.

There are, however, many other temples at Nikkō, for example the Shintō temple Futara-no-Jin-ja. In front stands the legendary bronze lantern called *Bake-mono-to-ro*, which is popularly supposed to have formerly possessed the power of assuming demon shape, and whilst in that form of annoying the inhabitants of Nikkō on dark nights. At last a courageous man attacked and wounded the demon in the head, and thus put an end to its depredations. In the cap of the lantern is shown a dent which is said to be where the sword struck the demon.

All Buddhist temples are constructed on the same plan, and thus it is that when one has been described all have been more or less so.

But, as we have said in a previous chapter, Buddhism is now merely a formal religion, yearly more neglected if not positively increasingly despised. The devotion of the

Japanese to their ancient national faith has been perpetuated by many temples; but they are far more severe in type than those of Buddha. One of the most beautiful and chaste in Kyōtō (which like Nikkō has many of size and importance) is the Hon-gwan-ji. This fane was, indeed, a labour of love, for not only was a large part of the 8,000,000 yen (£1,600,000) it cost contributed by peasants, but by them was supplied also much of the exquisite wood of which it is built. Many, too, "worked" the wood, and gave their labour ungrudgingly. To the sacred building also women contributed of what they value most highly. Only the greatest faith or greatest love can induce a Japanese woman to sacrifice her whole head of hair, although locks of hair are frequently to be seen suspended before an Izumo shrine. What acts of faith and love of women, therefore, must be enshrined in the long cables of their hair which served to raise each beam and rafter of the great Hon-gwan-ji temple into place—hawsers of the soft black hair of youth and early womanhood; the coarser of middle age; and the pathetic locks of the aged, withered-looking and shot with grey, which now hang suspended in the temple, lasting memorials of faith and voluntary sacrifice.

Into this building, which is one of the glories of Kyōtō, come the poorest of the very poor, the weary, old and worn, who kneel upon the golden-tinted matting and roll their offerings—mostly one or two *rin* pieces—across the floor towards the altar, until it looks as though it had veritably rained these tiny coins.

The sculptured bronze gates of Nagoya's masterpiece are always open, as though in invitation to the toiling ones to enter and find peace within, where the memory of factory and workshop, and the bustle of the busy town may for the time be forgotten. The wide open space of its earthen courtyard, environed by trees, gives a dignity



to the temple, which, built entirely of wood and guiltless alike of paint or stain, is so faded and weather-worn by age and wind and rain that in the sunshine it stands out clear-cut, pathetic, and grey against the brilliant light.

Under the eaves are carved with exquisite care numberless saints and sacred animals: all now colourless with age. Inside the time-worn temple the space is divided into three parts by slender, square columns of wood; but along the whole width of the interior is a glint of gold, with the centre and two side-altars shining in a dim sober light. There is no such riot of colouring as is found in many Buddhist temples. On a lotus leaf a figure of Amida Butsu—the Eternal Buddha—stands with uplifted hands, an ebon-hued figure against a golden background. Age-worn wood, relieved by dull gold and black, are all the decorations of this peaceful temple, in which many daily kneel whilst the city beyond the walls toils and labours, and in the unending struggle of life men and women are forging links in the eternal chain of sin which the Shintō faith teaches goes on for ever, with only Buddha, the just and merciful, to interpose and save the makers from the wages of death they have earned.

Of this great Lord Buddha, whose tenets have held sway in Japan for nearly twelve centuries, there are many images besides those which find a place in every Buddhist temple throughout the land. The most famous of them all is the great bronze figure, which for six centuries has sat at Kamakura, near Yokohama, peacefully and still; silhouetted against the blue sky amid the cherry-trees of the temple gardens—the great Lord Buddha with the heavy-lidded eyes and inscrutable smile, fifty feet in stature, and made of sheets of bronze, the sole surviving relic, save a few stones, of the beautiful temple in which in the middle of the thirteenth century the figure was placed. Amida Butsu, with eyes of pure gold and the silver bump



of wisdom in the centre of the brow, revered by rich and poor alike, visited by numberless pilgrims, has sat throughout the ages unchangeable. Once protected, by a magnificent temple 150 feet square, from the heat of summer, the chill winds of autumn, the snow of winter, and the soft nacre-tinted shower of cherry-blossom petals which now fall upon its shoulders and into its lap in the exquisite Japanese spring, it now looks out over the gardens and the kneeling throng of worshippers with unseeing, golden eyes and unchanging placid smile. Once the glory of a huge city of nearly a million inhabitants, it is now merely a pilgrimage spot. Both the city and the temple surrounding the shrine were swept remorselessly away by a tidal wave of the great Pacific; but the great statue of Amida Butsu remained unmoved amid the wreckage of the temple in which it sat, and the destruction of the great city, and the seething multitudes hurried to a sudden and fearful death. Twice the temple was built and twice destroyed; and now only a few sheds, and a few stones of the former buildings, remain to mark the spot where the great shrine of Buddha, with its huge roof supported upon threescore and more of massive wooden pillars, once stood.

There is no Sunday in Japan, nor are there any special days consecrated to offerings before this great idol, though on certain days special forms of worship are used. And so the adoration of Amida Butsu goes on almost unceasingly day by day, week by week, month by month, and year by year. This colossal figure must, we think, impress most who have seen it as the material embodiment of the Buddhist faith, whose tenets teach serene calm, the mutability of all earthly things, and the unchangeableness of the great Amida Butsu.

To the Japanese themselves the meaning of this impassive image is much or little according to the individual faith that is within them. It does not, however,

symbolise the religion of Japan, which, as we have already sought to make clear, lies deeper and nearer the national heart and life than the mere worship of this lonely figure of Buddha with its impenetrable smile, which has survived the life of centuries, and the destruction of a great city of barbaric magnificence, whose million inhabitants once bowed before it within the temple to the music of the Pacific waves, which break upon the shore close at hand. And as the figure sits on through the centuries, generations come and go, playing their part in the pageantry of life, and at last marching into the Great Silence which is as inscrutable to mortal sight and searching as the mystical smile of Amida Butsu itself. The great idol of Kamakura teaches one lesson, that God is unchangeable, the same for ever and ever. And with this mortals must fain be content.

In all Japan there are no shrines like those of Ise, where, shut in by the everlasting hills, stands the most sacred shrine in all the land, that of the great Sun-Goddess Amaterasu, from whom *Tenshi-sama*, the Son of Heaven, Emperor of Japan, is descended.

At Ise there are many festivals, amongst others Kinen-sai, "Praying for Harvest," which takes place on February 4th; Tsuki-nami-no-matsuri, "Monthly Festival," on June 15th; Kan-name, "Divine Tasting," September 15th and 16th; Shin-zō-sai, "Harvest Festival," on November 23rd; and before each of the foregoing (and other festivals) and once in every month, Ō-barai, a Great Purification, is performed. At Ise also there are many temples, the architecture of which is stated to be in the purest and most ancient style, and is chiefly distinguished for the absence of colouring and elaborate carvings, and the restraint of its ornamentation in metal work.

The tree-environed road to the shrine of the Sun-Goddess runs downwards to the edge of the rushing river,

and passes a still, grey pool, known as the Pool of Purification, in which all those who are on their way to the temple wash. Peasant and pilgrim, pedlar and *kurumaya*, who with dusty, tireless feet hastens along between the slender bamboo shafts of his *jinrikisha*, all stop to plunge their hands and feet in the waters of this secluded pool. Through the wood of cryptomerias and camphor trees, whose bark is supposed to have the power of calming the anger of the sea when thrown into it, the stone pathway winds till it comes to a flight of steps which passes beneath a gateway. Beyond is a rough wooden wall, against which stands a Japanese soldier on guard before the shrine.

Just beyond the gateway is yet another which is usually closed by a pure white curtain, which prevents all save privileged persons seeing further into the shrine. This is the veil of Amaterasu-Ō-Mi-Kami, the Sun Goddess, behind which, through the centuries since Japan took form as a nation, her shrine has stood. Within this since the year B.C. 4, when the princess who had charge of the mirror and mythical sword of the Goddess, after much wandering, chose this impressive and beautiful spot for a permanent temple and shrine, the former has remained. The sword was soon afterwards lent to the nephew of the princess, Yamato-dake-no-mikoto. Behind the veil rests the sacred mirror (which some Japanese writers refer to as though it were the deity herself, and others consider it merely an image or representation of the Goddess) locked in a box made of *hi-no-ki* wood, on a low stand covered with white silk. The mirror or image itself is wrapped in a bag of brocade, which has not within the memory of generation upon generation been opened, and is never taken off for renewal when the fabric shows signs of falling to pieces with age. It is merely placed in another bag, and the mystery of its contents has thus been perpetuated from



age to age, so that now the actual covering of the sacred relic is formed of many layers. Over the whole stands a wooden cage-like structure, ornamented with pure gold, and itself completely covered with a piece of coarse silk. It is this covering which the faithful pilgrims gaze upon with adoration, when at festivals the doors of the chapel are thrown open. None save the Mikado, her far-removed descendant, can pass behind the white curtain which hangs fold upon fold. The Japanese soldier is placed on guard lest some sacrilegious stranger should so much as attempt to touch or raise its mystic folds. There has been at least one distinguished victim of curiosity (and, strange to say, a Japanese), Viscount Mori, the head of the Department of Education and a Cabinet Minister. He sought to push aside the curtain with his stick, and, the act of attempted sacrilege becoming known in Tōkyō, a young Government clerk named Nischino, after assuring himself of the truth of the story, one day stabbed the Minister to death. How sacred is the inviolate shrine esteemed by the people at large is shown by the fact that popular sympathy was all on the side of the murderer.

The outside of the shrine, which is a grey-brown wooden building, unornamented and unadorned in any way, with a roof of thatch, which is pierced in two places by the cross-beams which rise anchor-shaped and bound with gold, is all that may be seen by the curious; far more truly impressive in its simplicity than the most splendid work of man could be. Set in a wide space, with the sombre belt of trees engirdling it, and these themselves environed by the circle of pale blue distant hills, every twenty years the shrine is born again: rebuilt by priestly hands the same to the minutest detail, each time through the long centuries.

And there in her perpetual shrine rests the Sun Goddess, older than the encompassing mountains, set



deep in the hearts and imagination of the Japanese race, assured of eternal youth by reason of eternal worship.

In the deserted temple of Tesshuji, where from their low hill the Gods look out over the exquisite sea, calm and blue, to great Fuji San beyond, in which the altars are bare and silent and the courtyard grass-grown and mossy, one has another phase of Buddhism—a phase which points to the neglect of the more ceremonial faith whilst that of the nation still flourishes. There the smiling Buddhas dream on in placid content, whilst both the life and mind of the people who in past ages worshipped at their shrines are undergoing a subtle but wonder-working change.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE JAPANESE HOME AND SOME SOCIAL CUSTOMS

THE Japanese home, so far as its more material aspect is concerned, is more or less familiar to most people through the medium of photographs and pictures. But notwithstanding this fact, there are several misconceptions which have arisen (how it is somewhat difficult to say) regarding even the mere structural arrangement of Japanese houses. Those of the better class are by no means the unsubstantial and even flimsy things of paper walls and bamboo frame as has so often and so erroneously been stated.

A well-built Japanese dwelling is open, it is true, to the four winds of heaven; and there is no "ventilation" problem to trouble the architects of Japan. Delicate joinery is used wherever possible, and most houses are distinguished by a lightness and airiness which is not only healthful, but charming. But except for the walls—which are chiefly formed of beautifully fitted sashwork—the component parts of a Japanese house are actually characterised less by flimsiness than solidity. A house with any claim to be well constructed must to all intents and purposes be earthquake proof. It is true that the poorer houses are not so built, and in consequence there is a great danger, when an earthquake of any severity occurs, of these dwellings collapsing and the *débris* taking fire. Indeed, the greater number of fatalities taking place at earthquake

time arise from deaths by burning of the unfortunate people who have been temporarily buried under the ruins of their overthrown dwellings.

But the better-class houses, as we have indicated, are of a lasting character. And, although from the fact that so much wood and other highly-inflammable material is used in their construction, the term of their existence is often short in the denser portions of large cities, where fires are of frequent occurrence, some houses in the country districts, where isolation has spelled for them safety, are frequently found which in their timbers and look of age bear witness to centuries of use, and care and solidity of construction. To enable the Japanese house to resist successfully the shocks of earthquakes, not only are solid materials of necessity employed for the framework of the buildings, but extreme care of construction is a *sine qua non*. The builders have most ingeniously and successfully complied with these conditions. Of foundations (as is usually understood by the term) there are none, for the object aimed at is to isolate the building as far as may be from the earth; and this is accomplished by erecting them upon pillars, which are not driven or embedded in the ground, but are themselves supported upon stones. Thus it happens that though the vibration of the earth may rock the house, unless the shock is of quite unusual severity it cannot effect its overthrow. The frame of the house itself is so made that it offers the greatest possible resistance to the destructive motion of the earthquake. Solid and with a system of curious bracing and dovetailing, which is the result of centuries of study and practical conflict with the dreaded power of earthquake shocks, this is able to offer its full share of resistance.

To most Western minds the enormous weight of the average Japanese roof would at first appear not only a mistake, but a source of very considerable danger. But



just as many things are topsy-turvy in the Mikado's empire, the Japanese place as it were their ballast on top instead of low down. If the houses were not isolated in the manner we have described, the heavy roof would be a great source of danger, but owing to the fact that from this system of isolation the earthquake cannot get any hold upon the building, the additional weight serves to solidify and steady the whole structure. The underlying principle of Japanese architecture, owing to the exceptional circumstances of constant seismic disturbances, thus becomes another example of the strange reversal of European ideas, needs, and methods which distinguishes the whole life of the people. In a word, the roof usurps the function of a foundation, and top-heaviness becomes an element of safety.

But although the roofs of Japanese houses are not only unusually heavy in themselves, but are often additionally weighted, the skill of the architects who first devised them was sufficient to prevent any undue appearance of clumsiness. The "way out" is, like so many other means to an end of this ingenious people, delightfully simple. By bending the broad eaves upwards in graceful curves instead of downwards, the appearance of the house is transformed from one of weight and solidity into one of aerial lightness.

But the Japanese house has several characteristics which greatly distinguish it from similar buildings of other nations. One in particular is the extraordinary economy with which the general and most artistic effect has been accomplished. Evolved during periods when the poverty of the people was great, when sumptuary laws of a severe character were in force, and when seismic disturbances were probably of even more frequent occurrence than at the present day, the economy was trebly enforced, and the observance of it was an aid to social and political success and advancement. The dwelling-house of Japan has thus come to stand out as a shining example of what can be



done with limited means and simple materials when taste and ingenuity both play their part.

Creating a lasting impression of being rather a summer house than a substantial and practical habitation, the Japanese dwelling is without any extraneous assistance a thing of artistic merit and beauty. The long, narrow *engawa* or veranda with its polished boards; the unbroken expanse of flooring, guiltless of encumbering furniture and covered with soft matting; the solid, highly-polished posts standing here and there, supporting the cross-beams and heavy burden of the roof, and forming so perfect a contrast to the fragile lattice-work and paper screens which serve as walls; and the beam-work with a frieze-like effect produced by panelled spaces, all go to the making of a habitation in which one experiences no sensation of unpleasant bareness nor need for completer decoration.

Even in the houses of the wealthy, where economy from a monetary reason need not be practised, the restraint which shows how closely akin the Japanese spirit as regards artistic feeling is to that of ancient Greece is everywhere apparent. Decoration, when it can be afforded and is desired, is almost always confined to the innermost part of the house and to one spot. It must even here not be in the least of an extraneous character. It is essential that it shall form an embellishment of the existing structure. It is upon the *tokonoma*, or place of honour, in the principal room of the house, therefore, that the decorative skill of the builder is generally expended. Upon this recess are lavished the costly and beautiful woods in the delicate grain, peculiar markings or colours of which the souls of the Japanese carpenter and connoisseur delight. And to the selection and acquisition of suitable woods the builder gives much anxious thought; and the carpenter in the matching, fitting, and polishing exercises his greatest care and skill. In the use of these beautiful woods, and their

perfect application to the decorative scheme, the whole art of Japanese architectural decoration is confined. There is no carving, no division of the columns into base, capital, or shaft, no moulding, no paint. The column and beam are left as nature formed them, or merely squared and polished. And yet, notwithstanding this fact, the total cost of fitting the *tokonoma* not infrequently exceeds that of the whole remainder of the house. In this nook is hung a single rare and often priceless *kakemono*, a scroll picture selected perhaps from dozens belonging to the owner, and below it is placed the single growing plant or flower, or a spray of blossom in a vase. These and the low stand upon which is a single example of lacquer, *cloisonné*, or other curio, also selected for the time being from many treasures, are all that is seen of furnishing or decoration upon entering a Japanese home.

By the subtle etiquette and politeness of Japan these are frequently changed for other *kakemono*, plants, flowers, or curios, the relative beauty, value, or uniqueness of which depend upon the honour or regard in which the expected guest is held; such a system of concentrating all the decorative charm in a house being in strong contrast to the frequently superfluous ornamentation of more Western dwellings.

Thus it is that when one enters a Japanese home of even the wealthy classes one is not bewildered by a superabundance of the material signs of wealth. Nor is one's eye confused nor mind distracted by the multitude of beautiful things, as it is in the mansions of Western peoples. And if at the same time one is acquainted with the rules of Japanese etiquette, all sense of strangeness and stiffness is banished, as comment upon the flower arrangement, the beauty of the woodwork, or the artist who painted the *kakemono* is permissible, and is even expected from the guest. How much more agreeable a





A PICTURESQUE HOME BY A LONELY SHORE.



custom than being driven back upon the subject of the weather! Not only are the host and hostess pleased by the interest shown in their possessions, but they are at once launched upon topics of conversation which they will enthusiastically discuss.

The principal material used for decorative and constructive work in Japanese architecture is bamboo. Partly by reason of the long period of Japanese isolation from the rest of the world, and partly because of the people's genius for concentration, the almost universal use of this one material came to be adopted. Whilst other nations ranged many countries, or perhaps almost the whole of the civilised world, for materials to be applied in the construction and adornment of their homes, the Japanese concentrated all their energies upon the application to all their needs of the one product of the kind which their native soil provided. And it must be admitted that no other material exists better calculated, by its varied and adaptable qualities, to serve the needs of an isolated people.

This elegant growth, which sometimes attains the height of seventy feet in a few months, which is straight as an arrow, and combines the lightness of cork with almost the strength and hardness of iron, smooth growing and easily split, and as resilient as it is rigid, has been applied by the Japanese to all their needs. Every portion is turned to good account by their ingenuity; it is utilised from the feathery tip of its topmost foliage to its very roots; and its presence is discoverable in every department of the nation's domestic life and economy. Though it is erroneous to suppose that the houses are built of it, yet in them it is everywhere to be found—in their adornments and furnishings, and in most of the appliances which are used in the life of the home.

In recent years there have been some attempts to engraft European features upon Japanese architecture,

and in some homes to have "European" rooms. These attempts have probably arisen from the desire the Japanese have to adopt Western ideas if at all practicable, or likely in any way to lead to greater efficiency or progress. It cannot, however, be claimed that these attempts have been successful. The houses which are known nowadays in Japan as "foreign" are indeed so in that they conform to no known school of architecture, either Occidental or Oriental. And it is difficult to imagine anything more disfiguring or more distressing in its effect than the attempts which here and there have been made, as it were, to engraft upon Japanese houses Western features. Only in the case of a few public buildings has this Europeanising been at all successful; and even these attempts look incongruous amid the lighter and more artistic native buildings. A Japanese room may at first appear bare, and under unfavourable conditions almost cheerless to a Westerner (but can never do so if seen with the beautiful Japanese sunshine streaming in soft, golden light through the *shoji*), but most people will agree that it is infinitely less distressing than an "European" room in a Japanese house. One is confronted by an incongruousness so complete that one turns with delight to the simplicity and artistic feeling which permeates the true Japanese apartment.

In only two respects can a Japanese house be adversely criticised from a Western point of view, if one is willing to admit its great charm and beauty of construction. The first point is its lack of privacy. The second its permeableness to cold. Regarding the first (which is a defect that does not so present itself to the Japanese themselves) it may be said that greater privacy—which may possibly in the near future become accepted as desirable owing to changing conditions of civilisation—could easily be secured without loss of the distinctive and artistic features of native

construction by substituting, at least, in the case of some rooms, more solid walls in place of the sliding *shoji* (outer panels) or *karakami* of paper. As regards the second point, it may be said that the Japanese themselves are through long centuries of training impervious or at least inured to the effects of cold. And to change their admirably hygienic and airy rooms and homes for the stuffy and seldom well-ventilated apartments of Western civilisation is not only unnecessary, but might have disastrous physical consequences.

The inner life of the Japanese home, the material portion of which we have sought to describe and explain, is set around with many interesting and even beautiful customs and observances which differentiate it from that of other lands. The place of Japanese women is even nowadays, when vital changes are surely, and in some respects even swiftly, taking place, so largely in the home that all the quaint ceremonies, superstitions, and myths which relate to its everyday affairs are of far greater importance to them than to the male members of the family circle.

In the control of O Ku Sama (the Honourable Lady of the House) are the yearly round of festivals, for each of which special food has to be prepared; the observances connected with births, marriages, and deaths; the household worship; and circumstances arising out of emergencies such as sickness, fires, or earthquakes, or of the frequent changes of residence which are so common in Japan, and necessitate such packing up and unpacking of the household goods and wardrobes.

In every Japanese household of the better and old-fashioned type there is found the little shrine which is the centre, and as it were crystallisation, of the religious life of the inmates. If the latter are of the Buddhist faith, there is the Butsudan or Buddha-shelf where is placed the image of Buddha, to which gifts of food are made, and



before which prayers are offered and incense burned. If, on the other hand, the household is Shintōist, the shrine is called the *kami-dana* or god-shelf, on which is placed the *gohei* in vases ; vessels, and receptacles for drink and food ; and a tiny lamp, usually merely a saucer filled with oil, in which floats a piece of pith as a wick. The *gohei* or sacred symbols of the Shintō faith are pieces of white paper, folded and cut in a peculiar manner, stuck in vases. Before this shrine daily offerings have to be made accompanied by reverential clapping of hands, and on feast days special ones are made, and the observances are of a less simple character.

But whether the family be of the Buddhist or Shintō faith, it is the mother or wife who attends to the religious observances, and upon her devolves the placing of the rice and wine before the ancestral tablets. It is she, too, who lights the little, twinkling lamp each night, around which soft-winged moths circle to their doom, and she, too, who sees that the proper food is prepared and set out on the Butsudan or *kami-dana*.

As each child of the household grows up, it gathers from various sources and receives on various occasions amulets ; and these, though always worn when in full dress or on ceremonial occasions, are many of them too precious to be permitted to run the risk of loss in play, and so it is one of the many little duties of the mother (or other female relative taking her place) to guard them carefully as talismans against the risks and evils which surround the lives of children. Many of these amulets—those in particular given on the occasion of the *miya mairi*—are merely slips of wood or pieces of paper written upon, and bearing the seal of the temple issuing them. Some of these charms are supposed to be safeguards against certain kinds of sickness ; others to preserve the sight ; others to guard from accident ; and yet others to give the possessor a good





A JAPANESE WELL.



kind of handwriting; or to act as general safeguards against ill and evil spirits; and yet others to ensure prosperity in the child's future life. All these are kept together by the mother, and when the little owners reach years of discretion pass into their own keeping. They are, as a rule, finally stored carefully away in some little-used drawer or other suitable receptacle, where they remain until the death of their owner. Amongst the many curious and superstitious treasures which are hoarded and held in esteem by the Japanese, none is more remarkable than the small parcel of white paper marked with the name of the child, which contains a portion of the umbilical cord saved at the time of each individual's birth, and preserved till his or her death, and then buried with its owner, so as to furnish him or her with the means of a reincarnation.

Though a fortune-teller is consulted with reference to the lucky days for important events, such as the commencement of a long journey, a marriage, or a removal to another home, it is upon the mother of the family that devolves the determining of the lucky or unlucky days for the beginning or transaction of various kinds of business, and for the events of minor importance in family life. This arises from the fact that although the Japanese recognise that they cannot be for ever running to the professional fortune-teller, they firmly believe there is bad luck lying in wait in the background to thwart their plans if their business operations, journeys, marriages, etc., are not undertaken at the proper times and seasons, and that by a due observance of the latter good fortune may be assured.

The Japanese calendar is divided into cycles of twelve years' duration, each year named after a certain animal, so are the days and hours also divided into twelve, each bearing the names of the same animals, the signs of the Chinese zodiac. The animals are as follows:—the rat, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, cock, dog, and

bear. The superstition is that each animal brings its own variety of good or bad fortune in the hour, day, or year over which it is deemed to preside.

The Japanese believe that it is only by a skilful balancing of the pros and cons of these things that the fortune-teller or other person giving the matter consideration can determine the luck or ill-luck of any particular hour or day in any year. For example, the dog is unlucky; but it is possible that this may be neutralised or even turned into good luck by the combination of the hare or tiger which may happen to preside over the same hour, as there are usually three animals of different portents presiding over human destinies in each hour. As another example, a person born in the year of the rat should never lack wealth; but if born in the day or hour of the rat, in the year of the rat his good fortune will be doubled. But, on the other hand, a person born in the year of the rat may, nevertheless, have poverty and not riches if the day and hour of birth fall under the domination of the monkey or any other unlucky animal. It can be easily understood that the gift of determining these things is much esteemed, and the skill and knowledge necessary to do so great. In fact, prophecy by the Japanese calendar is a complicated matter; but there are, happily for the prophets, many loopholes when things do not happen as they were foretold.

Few families enter upon the building of a new house in Japan, or even determine the position of the front door, without consulting the oracles. And when the roof is ready to be placed in position (the work of fitting the beams, etc., having been performed in the builder's yard or on some convenient and close-adjointing plot), the fortune-teller is consulted as to whether the day chosen by the builder for the putting on of the roof is a propitious one. And the same form is gone through at other stages



of the construction ; and also when the house is completely finished and ready for immediate occupation. Everything is prepared ; the furniture, beds, family clothing, and other belongings from the old house are ready packed, and the fortune-teller is consulted.

The move is made on the first favourable opportunity, and very early in the morning of the day chosen the relatives and friends of the family begin to make their appearance ; often, when unable to come themselves, sending their servants with gifts of provisions. To the not inconsiderable crowd which gathers is added every shop-keeper or *jinrikisha* man, or their representatives, who has ever enjoyed, or hopes in the future to enjoy, the custom or patronage of the "moving" family. There is thus no lack of assistance, and the family move is accomplished with commendable speed and comfort.

During the day all the helpers, whether invited or not, must be fed at proper intervals, and when the long day's work comes to an end and the helpers depart one by one to their respective homes, it is the business of the mistress of the house to see that every servant or representative of a business firm who has assisted receives a present of money commensurate with the services rendered, and in keeping with the social status of the family they have helped. This present is always done up neatly in white paper. Then there remains a further duty for the lady of the house, when all have gone, and the *amado* or outside shutters are closed for the night—the making of a list of all to whom the family have been in anyway indebted. To every one of these, within a short time, some acknowledgment of their services and kindness must be made, either in the form of a call or by the sending of a gift.

After the family are comfortably settled in their new home the mistress of the house sends out to all the neighbours a kind of macaroni, or *soba*, which is to announce the

arrival of the new family. The number of neighbours to whom the *soba* is despatched is determined by several quaint means. If the house is one of only a few in a compound, it is sent to all in the enclosure; but if, on the other hand, the houses are very numerous it is sent merely to the nearest five, or perhaps to those who may draw water from the same well. A curious modern development of this custom of *soba* sending is to send not the article itself, but an order for it on the nearest restaurant at which it can be obtained.

With reference to the universal custom of giving presents on all occasions which prevails in Japan, it may be remarked that it seems to be less a sentimental than a provident custom. Presents would appear to be chiefly given (except when for services rendered) for the purpose of conciliating those whose enmity is feared, or insuring the services in advance of persons whose assistance may possibly at some time be needed. The provident housewife always thus ingratiates herself with the carpenter, the fireman, and others of whose help she may, at some future time, be in need. The first named, known as Daiku San, stands high in popular estimation and amongst his fellows of the artisan class; and, in fact, still ranks next to the *samurai*, and above both farmers and shopkeepers. And when the "Flowers of Tokio," "*Tokio no hana*" (by which pretty and vivid phrase the Japanese describes fires), bloom, it is well to be friends with the fireman. And after the fire is out (and sometimes whilst one's house is burning) Daiku San appears on the scene intent on business, and ready in a few days—if he has been propitiated with previous gifts—to build another house even prettier than that which in a few moments may have become a small heap of smouldering ashes.

Should a fire break out in the vicinity of the home of a provident woman, on their arrival the fireman will wet the

roof and walls (if the hose works and there is sufficient water), seal the storehouse (supposed to be fireproof), into which all portable articles are swiftly carried, and light the great alarm lanterns at the gates by the roadside to let her friends and neighbours know that her house is in danger, and thus summon them to her assistance. None who see these signal lights will disregard their mute appeal; and very soon there will be a band of willing and energetic helpers, who will not only do what is possible to prevent the threatened catastrophe, but will, should the house after all catch fire and be burned down, take the homeless ones, and all the belongings which may have been rescued, into their own hospitable dwellings.

Those who neglect the little presents, made as deposits in the bank of goodwill, to be drawn on in future emergencies, will probably find when trouble arises assistance is not forthcoming as promptly as could be wished. When the *amado* need repairing or the roof leaks, the carpenter will discover he has a more pressing job elsewhere and cannot come at once; when the garden has been ripped up or destroyed by a typhoon, the gardener who could put it all straight has no time just then to come and see to things; and when a fire breaks out in a neighbour's house, the firemen will not attend to preventive measures until they have done so for every one else, so that if the house is not actually destroyed it will have been injured by scorching and fire and water.

The bath holds an important position in the Japanese home. It is a general custom to bathe every afternoon, and by long usage the Japanese have learned to take their baths at a temperature which is at first impossible for the European, and, if necessary and convenient to do so, in public! It must be admitted, however, that nowadays the custom of bathing at one's own doorway, and meanwhile chatting to neighbours across the street, is more con-



fined than it used to be even a few years ago to the remoter and smaller towns and villages.

The home bath-tub is oval in shape, varying somewhat in size, and generally about twenty to thirty inches deep. At one end is the pipe of the stove which runs down through the bottom, and at the bottom is a grate for the charcoal fire which heats the water. The general practice—and one which should certainly be followed by the inexperienced—is to get into the tub when the water is only comfortably warm, and to sit there until the heat has increased to as great a degree as can be borne. In fine weather the bath, which is fairly portable, is often taken in the garden, and callers may or may not be invited to have a chat with the host or hostess whilst the bath is in progress. The Japanese themselves have by long custom become so inured to heat that they can enjoy bathing in water at a temperature of from  $120^{\circ}$  to  $125^{\circ}$ , but it takes a lot of practice to make anything over  $115^{\circ}$  grateful and comforting to a European skin!

The Japanese custom of indiscriminate and public bathing is not perhaps easy to understand; but it must be remembered that their standards of decency are entirely different from our own. According to the Japanese standard, any exposure of the person (even total exposure) which is merely incidental to cleanliness, health, or convenience whilst doing necessary work, is perfectly modest and permissible; but, on the other hand, an exposure of the person when made for show, however slight, is indelicate and to be condemned. Thus it is that Japanese women who would unhesitatingly take their bath in public if the necessity arose, would regard with horror the wearing of a costume which was designed to show off the figure though still completely covering it, or which was *décolleté* to the extent in vogue in English drawing-rooms or at English dinner-parties. Strange as this attitude



may appear, it would be doing the women of Japan a gross injustice to conclude that the Japanese as a whole are in the least wanting in a sense of decency, or that the women are not of the most refined and womanly modesty.

In this, as in other things, it is only when the Japanese point of view has been mastered that much which at first sight appears inconsistent and even ridiculous is clearly understood, and it becomes possible to do justice to a people who are often in these matters misrepresented.

In the Japanese home people don't go to bed; the beds come to them. One advantage there is in this custom: any room can be used as a sleeping apartment if necessary, as there is no bedstead to be moved or fixed up, and one can go to bed with a minimum of trouble at any time. It is only necessary to express a wish to sleep or retire for the night, to clap one's hands and exclaim "*Futon motte koi*" (Bring the quilts), and the thing is done. The little maid-servant who answers the summons hastens to the *fukuro dana*, or cupboard in which the bed is kept during the day, and in a twinkling the *futon*, which are rolled up on the two shelves, are taken out and spread on the white matting floor. They are placed one upon the other, and, if the family have adopted sheets, one of these is placed upon the top of the *futon*. Then comes the big top *futon* or *yagu*, which has sleeves like a *kimono*, and is longer than the under ones and is rolled up or merely piled up at the foot of the bed ready to be drawn up over one when one has lain down. At the head of the bed is the *makura* or grooved pillow, about the size of a deep cigar-box, and made of choice woods in the case of the better classes. In shape it is like a truncated pyramid; and in the hollow in which the neck of the sleeper is intended to rest is a tiny bran-stuffed pillow, covered with several sheets of clean paper, which are removed each morning and replaced with fresh ones.

A first experience of the use of the *makura* is, to the Westerner at all events, a painful one. In the morning the neck feels as though it had been badly bruised, and the joints as though they were rusty hinges in considerable need of careful lubrication. But after a time one becomes not only accustomed to the "Japanese pillow," but to find it not so devoid of comfort as one at first was forced to suppose. In the end of the *makura* will generally be found a drawer, in which is placed tobacco—very light in colour and mild in flavour—and also probably pipes—tiny things with bowls not much larger inside than the tip of one's little finger. If they are not in the *makura*, the thoughtful host will have seen that they have been placed on a tray beside the *tobako ban*, a small wooden box in which is the *haifuki*, a combination of spittoon and ash-tray, and the *hibachi* or little charcoal brazier, by means of which the pipe is lighted.

Then, provided with the *kaya* or green mosquito net, hung around the bed by four cords at its corners, which when one is inside not only keeps off the mosquitoes, but also, alas! deprives the inmate of the tent-like structure of a good deal of fresh air, one can turn in. But before one can finally retire to rest the *rosoku* (candles with wicks made of paper) or *rampu* (the lamp), whichever method of illumination the household may affect, must be removed, and in their place the *andon* or night-lamp is lighted. It is large, square, and made of white paper, and is lighted by a taper fed by a small saucer of oil inside.

The little woman—perhaps she is a daughter of the house—who has made all these preparations for one's comfort will be impatient for one to get into bed. She will not understand any shyness on the part of the guest, and considers it her duty as a good hostess, and as a matter of common politeness, to practically tuck one up ere quitting the room. Then after this is done, with a



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quaintness which is charming, and a bow so low that she seems for the moment, in the soft and dim light of the room, to double up into a little heap of clothing on the floor, she says "*Oyasumi nasa*," and vanishes through the *karakami*, which click together in their grooves after her. Then one is at last in bed after the Japanese fashion.

The servants of the household usually sleep either in the kitchen or on the floor of the room which opens into it—men, women, boys, and girls together, upon their mattress-like beds—in one long row, each comfortably tucked up on his or her *futon*, and with his or her head hanging over the *makura*. The use of the *futon*, instead of the more complicated sleeping arrangements of Western people, has not a few advantages. Firstly, the beds can be easily and completely purified by sunshine and aired. Secondly, they are very portable, and can be easily stowed away during the daytime, leaving the wide expanse of floor unencumbered, and in case of fire or "moving" can be quickly rolled up and transported to a place of safety or the new home. Thirdly, they are cheap; only those used by the rich, which are stuffed with wadding formed of pure silk and covered with a heavy silk fabric, cost more than a few shillings, and the best are generally cheaper than a first-class hair mattress in England or America.

In summer the *futon* bed possesses many obvious advantages, amongst others that if the weather be very hot it can be arranged on the *engawa*. In winter, as the Japanese house of any age is somewhat draughty, owing to the "easing" by constant sliding to and fro of the *shoji*, *amado*, and *karakimi*, and the strain put upon the joinery work generally by frequent earthquake shocks, it is rather the reverse. One may pile on extra *yagu*, and sleep (as most Japanese do) with one's feet almost against the *kotatsu* or stove, around which the beds are ranged for

warmth; but towards morning, when the fire dies down, chill is sure to strike the sleeper and cause discomfort. But nowadays, in some Japanese houses stoves of a more substantial and efficient kind are being slowly introduced, and the Japanese room is after all easily warmed when the proper means for doing so are taken.

One of not the least quaint privileges the Japanese host and hostess enjoy, when entertaining a party of guests who show no inclination to depart at a reasonable hour, is that of retiring to rest. The host or hostess does not mention the fact that he or she intends to do so—that would be a breach of etiquette and hospitality. They simply disappear, leaving their guests (to whom by Japanese politeness the house now really belongs) to enjoy themselves. The host can do this without any misgivings, for his servants will see to the comfort of the visitors with punctilious exactness and charming completeness, and should any inquiries regarding the host's whereabouts be instituted, the maids will merely remark that the master of the house is just outside, and will be back again soon—generally making use of that wonderfully elastic and non-committing word *tadaima*, which means “presently,” “just now,” “in a moment,” and various other spaces of time. If the entertainment offered to the guests is good, the host may be almost certain, when he makes his appearance in the morning, of finding his guests calmly sleeping on the *futon*, which the thoughtful maid-servant will have spread for their use on the floor of the room in which they have sat playing games, smoking their tiny pipes, or drinking *saké* until the small hours.

The ceremony of tea-drinking plays an important part in the Japanese homes of the better class, the girls of the family being trained from childhood in the complicated rites which go to the entertainment of guests with the Japanese equivalent of “afternoon tea.”

The *Cha-no-e* or tea ceremony was formerly a "rite" of the Buddhist priests, who learned from the Chinese to use and appreciate the tea plant, which came from China in the tenth century A.D. For many hundreds of years its cultivation, as well as the preparation of the drink itself, was a monopoly of the priests, with a few exceptions of wealthy men-of-letters. Thus it came to pass that tea itself was regarded as something precious, and the drinking of it of the nature of a ceremony. The use of tea remaining so long in the hands of the priests and the more aristocratic portion of the community, a most elaborate and curious ceremonial gradually grew up and surrounded it; although four centuries after its introduction from China it was sold by Buddhist priests in the streets at the equivalent of about a penny per cup.

Nowadays there are two varieties of the tea ceremony known as "Great Tea" and "Little Tea." Though differing in some material respects, both are in effect a system of cultivating good manners and elegant deportment in daily life with a cup of tea as the pivot upon which the system turns. The principal thing is not really the tea-drinking, but through its medium the attainment of a graceful deportment, inward dignity, and presence of mind. In *Cha-no-e* every movement of the body and of each separate limb has to be studied to the least important detail, and by this means the whole ceremony is ensured the most perfectly graceful expression. But this alone is not all, for the dignity and self-control of the partaker in the rite is of equal importance, and without these things ultimate success is considered impossible. Thus it is that one must regard the "Great Tea" more in the light of a physical and moral exercise than as a mere pastime or simple satisfying of one's thirst. But this high mission has not always been kept sight of by even the greatest masters of the tea ceremony. And divested of this mission of instruction in grace



and politeness *Cha-no-e* has often degenerated into a tiresome and apparently meaningless set of formalities, and this is especially so with its abbreviated form known as "Little Tea."

But, nevertheless, the "Great Tea" still remains one of the most complicated ceremonials of Japan, of which a knowledge how to push aside the *karakami* to enable one to enter the room where tea is to be made; how to bring in and arrange, in the proper order, the different utensils required for the brewing; how to sit down noiselessly and gracefully in front of the boiling kettle; how to put the tea leaves in the pot; how to pour the infusion into the tiny porcelain cups; how to give the tea a "head"; and how, when, and where to place the cup for the guest, are but a few of the things which have to be as carefully thought out, studied, and practised as the ramifications of "Drawing-room" etiquette must be mastered by a *débutante* in England.

And this is not all; for the guest will have had to master the art of taking a sweet from the dish; how to hold the teacup when he has taken it up off the floor; how to drink up its contents in the right number of sips; how to wipe the edge of the cup clean; how to turn the cup round horizontally; how to place it within easy reach of his host or hostess, and a score of other things. And for each of these actions, both on the part of the dispenser and receiver of the tea, there is a prescribed and immutable form even regarding the slightest and most unimportant movement. The finger must be bent in a particular way; the wrist turned round so; and the body held in a certain position, all the while varying slightly or considerably with each motion of the hand, wrist, or arm, as the case may be.

Superfluous, and even absurd in many respects, as all this ceremonial may be in Western eyes, that it has served a useful and instructive purpose in the past is undeniable.



It has educated the Japanese in a love of harmonious curves, purity of line, repose of disposition, and grace of movement. And none of these things are to be despised. The same root idea which permeates the tea ceremonial is to be traced in other branches of Japanese art, including that of landscape gardening on a minutely designed scale, painting, and flower arrangement. To all of which things a sense of harmonious completeness has been imparted.

The spring cleaning which afflicts English households in each year with a burden of discomfort and responsibility, is undertaken by the Japanese housewife in December. Even though the amount of furniture be small, the operation is an elaborate one. Every nook and corner, every box and cabinet, is turned out, cleaned, polished, and put in order; the *tatami* are taken up, brushed, and if necessary beaten; the woodwork of the dwelling is scrubbed from floor to ceiling; the paper walls and panels are flicked with a paper brush, which is the Japanese equivalent for a European "feather" duster. And all articles of clothing and bedding are sunned, aired, and carefully overhauled, and when necessary repaired. The numerous articles of porcelain ware, bronzes, lacquer goods, and other curios, which are stored away in boxes for use when a change of those in the house is decided upon, are all taken from their cases, denuded of their wrappings, dusted and carefully packed up again. The garden also comes in for its share of "spring" cleaning, fresh flowers are planted, the trees clipped, and all made as beautiful and charming as possible.

The "orgie of cleanliness" lasts about a week, as a general rule. If the house is large, the helpers are more numerous, that is all; and so an undertaking which may mean a month's or more upheaval in England is curtailed within reasonable limits. When the cleaning is completely finished, and the house has received a final beating down with fresh bamboo, a festival of thankfulness takes place.

During the following week much time is devoted to the preparation of the *mochi* and other food for the New Year's celebration. This kind of dumpling, made of rice, is so distinctly connected in the Japanese home with festivities that, if one finds it in a friend's house at a time not dedicated to a known festival, it is always polite to inquire what domestic event of a pleasant character its presence indicates. One is sure to discover a marriage, birth, or some other occasion for rejoicing has caused its preparation. It holds in the affections of Japanese children much the same place as do plum-pudding and mince-pies in those of English little ones.

During, or just before, the last week of the old year the Japanese tradesmen begin to send in their bills. How lengthy some are, too! We remember a friend who used always to keep a register of the yards (we are not sure it was not miles) his annual bills came to. Every little item is set out in detail, and complicated little sums in *rin* and *sen* (there are ten of the former to the half-penny) appear on the margin in prodigal profusion. The provident housewife, however, knows what to expect, and either settles these portentous bills herself promptly—as is expected of her—or gets the master of the house to do so.

Every one, indeed, is expected to clear up his books or pay his debts by the last day of the old year, so as to start the New Year afresh. And so universal is this custom, and so disgraceful is debt esteemed, that if a man has not or cannot raise sufficient money to pay his creditors by the usual day, it is by no means an uncommon thing for him to sell off sufficient or even all his property at an "alarming sacrifice" to enable him to do so. The only other honourable way out of his difficulties is for him to commit suicide. The world is evidently too "difficult" for him.

At the end of the year any one who happens to be in

Japan and wishes to bring away curios and other things, has very often an unrivalled opportunity of acquiring them at a price never touched at any other season. Shop-keepers will be holding bargain sales, to enable them to pay the wholesale houses from which they have obtained their stock; and the small worker in enamel, lacquer, or metal will frequently be compelled to part with his choicest work for half its regular price.

The New Year is a very busy time in Japan, and there is, indeed, so much work done in the average Japanese home during the last week or two of the year, that one can well believe the capable and good-tempered women who preside over the domestic destinies of each household, and the industrious little maids who work tirelessly over the complicated house-cleaning, must heave sighs of relief when the New Year with its delightful festivities dawns.

Life in the Japanese home, as will have been gathered, differs in many particulars from that of an English one; but in some respects it is much the same. It has just the same cares, joys, sorrows, and satisfactions; and upon O Ku Sama—the Honourable Lady of the House—as in Western lands, depends much of the comfort and prosperity of the household who dwell beneath its roof.



## CHAPTER V

### CONCERNING JAPANESE BABIES, GIRLS AND WOMEN

FOR many years past the Japanese woman has been chiefly presented to Western eyes as a fascinating and somewhat irresponsible little being, with gracious manners, charming costume, and many graceful customs. In fact, to most Western people the *geisha*, who does in a large measure combine in her person the characteristics we have mentioned which are attributed to her sex in Japan generally, has been the Alpha and Omega of Japanese womanhood. But no greater mistake could be made than to place all Japanese women in so restricted a class as we have indicated. But although all seem to be inspired by the national spirit of self-sacrifice, patriotism, and courtesy, they vary in type, disposition, and occupation quite as greatly as the women of other lands.

That there is an undefinable charm emanating from the women of Japan is not to be questioned, but those who know them well and have studied them in their different moods have not found them lacking in the greater and, shall we say, sterner qualities, which must, indeed, have been present in the women of any nation which was destined to attain the position which Japan occupies at the present day.

Unlike so many Eastern nations, the Japanese draw no hard and fast distinction between the sexes at their



birth. Whether a boy or a girl be born in a family it is a matter for rejoicing, and this, although boys alone are capable of perpetuating the family name and inheriting titles or estates. With many Eastern peoples the girl starts life with the stigma attaching to a distinctly inferior being, or at least is openly unwelcome; but in Japan girls are considered as having an almost equally important place in the family circle as their brothers.

A birth in a family is an event for great rejoicing, and both mother and infant have a trying time of it during the first few weeks of its life. Much rest neither of them get; for the baby is fussed over and handed from person to person, and talked to in a way that would make a Western mother tremble for its health and even chances of ultimate survival.

The baby, who generally receives numberless presents, all of which have to be wrapped in white paper on which some inscription has been written, the parcel being tied with a peculiar make of red and white paper string and containing *noshi*, or dried fish, carefully wrapped up in a piece of coloured paper, is christened before the seventh day. But although there is no especial ceremony connected with this event—the child's birth being merely inscribed at the office of registration in the district—the family and household make the day a holiday in honour of the name-giving.

One curious point concerning the naming of the child is that it seldom receives that of a living member of the family or of any friend. To a boy the father's name, slightly modified, is frequently given, and the names of long dead ancestors are sometimes used. As a general rule the father names the child, although in some instances a great friend or patron of the family may be asked to do so. In the case of girls names of beautiful objects, such as flowers and trees; natural phenomena, such as sun-

shine, moonlight, snow, etc., are given; whilst boys of the lower classes frequently receive such descriptive names as wolf, bear, rock, etc.

On the thirty-first day of its life the baby, if a boy, and on the thirty-third if a girl, is taken for the first time to the temple, which ceremony is called *miya mairi*. For this event great preparations are usually made, and the little one is dressed in its finest clothes of gay colours of silk or crape. In various places upon the dress the crest of the family is embroidered, as it is indeed on all ceremonial dresses for young and old alike. The young baby is carried, accompanied by the other members of the family, to one of the Shintō temples, and is there placed under the protection of the presiding deity of that temple, which in future is supposed to become the special guardian or patron saint of the child throughout its life. Offerings are made to the god and also to the priests of the temple, and then, the ceremony over, there is generally an entertainment of some kind or other at the home of its parents. In the case of families of high rank these festivities are on an elaborate and costly scale.

On this auspicious day the family usually send some acknowledgment of the presents which have been received at the time of the baby's birth, or since that event; and the acknowledgment very frequently takes the shape of other presents in return, which are sometimes cakes of *mochi*, or rice paste, and sometimes gifts of the red bean rice. If rice is sent, it is usually put in a handsome lacquer box which is placed on a lacquer tray, all usually covered with a square of crape or silk. The curious part of this is that both the box and tray and the silk (the only really valuable parts of the present) must be returned, and the box is sent back unwashed after its contents have been removed, as it would be most unlucky to wash it. As a general rule, a letter of thanks accompanies the present of rice, etc., and

occasionally, when it is wished to make an especially handsome gift, a box of eggs or some *katsuobushi* (a kind of dried fish) is also included in the gift. As frequently a hundred or more return presents must be made, the mother's memory is well taxed to see that no one has been forgotten, and several men and boys are often kept busily employed for days in running the various messages.

Japanese babies, whether girls or boys, are dressed very much alike; and are, indeed, quaint and interesting little beings, as a rule very good tempered and easy to manage. Babies of the commoner people are within a very few weeks after birth carried about tied to the back of some member of the family, who may be either an older sister or brother, in the way which has been made familiar by pictures of Japanese children. One would scarcely imagine that it was very comfortable for the child, and one frequently sees infants of only three or four weeks old tied to the backs of their little nurses (who are, many of them, not more than seven or eight years old themselves), with nodding heads and blinking eyes, but generally with a good-tempered smile lighting up their little faces.

The babies live almost entirely in the open air, even in all weathers, and when it is cold the sister's or brother's *haori*, or coat, serves not only as an extra cover for the wearer, but also for the baby. One effect of the babies living so much in public is that they very early in life have an intelligent and interested look, and seem to watch and enjoy the games of older children. Perhaps to Western ideas for small children to be so much in the streets and gardens would not be considered as good for them; but it may be remarked that, though they are so much in evidence, they are allowed to pass their early days without being talked to too much, and without the jogging up and down and fussing over which is so much the practice of nurses, and even of parents, in more Western countries.



Of course, the babies of the middle class have proper nurses or nursemaids to attend upon them, who carry them about on their backs until they are able to run by themselves. They are not much seen in the streets, as most middle-class Japanese possess a pleasant garden, though often a small one, of their own, in which the children play. Babies of the upper class are never carried about on the backs of their nurses, but are carried in the arms, European fashion, or nowadays sometimes wheeled in European baby-carriages. And as this, of course, entails the entire attention of the nurse, only the rich people can afford for their little ones to be so treated.

The poorer women are so skilful by long practice that they can do all their household work, draw water, wash clothes, and even do some amount of gardening, with the babies strapped to their backs, without inconvenience to themselves or harm to the little ones.

The babies of the Imperial family, from the moment of their birth until they are able to toddle, are held night and day in the arms of attendants.

From a very early stage the Japanese baby is made to sit with its legs bent under it, and thus the extraordinary flexibility of the knees, which is necessary for comfort and ease of sitting in the Japanese way, is insured. Authorities, doctors and others, who have made a study of the Japanese physique, have come to the conclusion that this method of sitting is not only unnatural and even injurious, but has had a very considerable effect upon the physique of the race. It would doubtless take several generations to overcome these physical characteristics by the introduction of European chairs and tables and other articles of furniture, but these would probably, in the course of time, bring about a very distinct change.

The Japanese home, with its soft matted floors and freedom from superfluous ornaments and furniture, is a

perfect paradise for babies who, with their little feet covered with soft *tabi* (digitated socks), can toddle and tumble about without any risk of coming to harm or of hurting themselves. After learning to walk so comfortably and easily in the house, the baby is at first somewhat handicapped when it comes to out-of-door explorations by the fact that its movements are hampered by *geta* or *zori*, the former being wooden clogs worn by a strap passing between the toes, and the latter light sandals. But the Japanese baby has already had some experience in balancing when tied to its nurse's back, and so it soon becomes accustomed to trot about on its little wooden clogs, generally balancing itself with skill, sometimes with a difficulty which if very alarming is at the same time amusing.

The distinction between the dress of boys and girls—although they are in early babyhood dressed alike—begins quite early, the boy being dressed in the soberer colours, greys, browns, darker blues and greens; whilst the little girl still wears the most gorgeous of tints and largest of patterns on her *kimono*, the predominant colour of which is red. White being the garb of mourning in Japan, one never sees small children dressed in it, but always in colours. The materials used for children's dresses are just the same as for their elders in a similar station of life, and as these are frequently not so washable as the cambric, linen, or flannel garments of Western children, the Japanese baby of the poorer class, though of spotless cleanliness in its person, often wears garments which would be the better for washing or renewal.

The Japanese language lends itself to the early expressions of young children, and long before their little European brothers or sisters would be able to talk in an intelligible manner and ask definitely for things, the Japanese baby begins to chatter in soft, easily spoken words which have a definite meaning. Some of these

words or sounds are very similar to the early "talk" of English babies, but with totally different meanings. For example : *Papa* means tobacco ; *O-mam ma* means boiled rice ; *bé-bé* means dress or *kimono* ; whilst *iya* means the baby is not happy, or wishes to refuse a thing ; and *ta-ta*, instead of meaning, as with us, good-bye, is the *tabi*, sandals or other foot-gear.

When the boy baby emerges into childhood, and thence into boyhood, he first goes to school, and then insensibly drifts into or is placed in some trade, business, or profession according to his position in life, aptitude, and in some cases the precedent afforded by his ancestors. When the little girl leaves babyhood behind, she finds the life into which she emerges bright and happy to a degree, but set about with much etiquette, the ramifications of which it is her duty and business in life to master ; and, of course, from her earliest years to old age she is subject to the control of the stronger sex. The first duties that she learns are that her position in life and the respect paid to her will depend very largely upon her own cheerful obedience, pleasing manners, and personal neatness and cleanliness.

Till quite recently there was no career or vocation open to her, and her duties had always to be household ones, or, if she belonged to the peasant classes, the work of the fields. She had always to be dependent upon either father, husband, or son ; and she early learnt the lesson that her greatest happiness was to be gained, not by the possession of intellectual attainments, but by the acquisition of that perfect self-control which is expected of all Japanese women to even a greater extent than of men. And even nowadays not only has she to learn to conceal all outward signs of any disagreeable emotions—pain, grief, anger, jealousy, for example—but to have always a cheerful smile and agreeable manners even under the most trying circumstances. This she is early taught is the



secret of true politeness, and all women who wish to be well-thought-of and lead happy lives must master it. To this teaching must be attributed to a very great extent the very charming and dignified manners of almost all Japanese women and even of very tiny girls. Whilst the latter are not forward or "pushing," they are not bashful or awkward, and there is no self-consciousness to spoil their good manners. They always exhibit a great consideration for the comfort of those around them, united to a very child-like simplicity of manner.

The Japanese child undoubtedly appears to come into the world already equipped in some respects with the good manners which so generally, in the case of Western children, have to be more or less laboriously acquired. It is difficult, of course, to say how far the charming manners of the Japanese children are attributable to the fact that their ancestors for many generations have studied politeness till it has become a science, and how far to their individual upbringing. But for ourselves we are inclined to think that politeness with the Japanese is a partly inherited tendency fostered by careful instruction in the early years of each child's existence. And, indeed, it would be strange if they failed to grow up polite and well behaved, considering the uniformly gentle and courteous treatment that they obtain from all those about them, and the unceasing instructions they receive in the principles of self-restraint and thoughtfulness for others.

To a Westerner one of the most curious things in a Japanese household are the formalities that are universal, even between brothers and sisters, and the great respect paid by all the younger members of the family to the more aged. A younger sister, too, must always pay due respect to the elder, even in the matter of so small a thing as to wait for her to enter a room first; and throughout the family the custom is for the convenience and comfort and

wishes of the older members to be always consulted before those of the younger.

The little Japanese girl has a happy niche in the family circle, for she is almost invariably the pet and plaything of her father and older brothers, and is never addressed by any one in the family, except by her parents, without the title of respect to which she is entitled. By the servants of the household she is always addressed as O Jo Sama, which is literally young lady; and if she is an elder sister she is called by her younger brothers and sisters Né San, which means elder sister. On the other hand, if she be a younger sister her name, such as Mumé preceded by the honorific "O" followed by San, will be that by which she is addressed by her younger brothers and sisters and by the servants; the name being, literally translated, "The Honourable Miss Plum."

As she passes through the years which intervene between babyhood and womanhood the Japanese girl is the recipient of much love and tender care. But, notwithstanding this, she does not grow up irresponsible or untrained, or ignorant of the duties which will devolve upon her when she attains womanhood. She has to learn all those duties which fall to the lot of the Japanese wife and mother of a household; and nowadays in addition to these things, which formerly were the chief necessary for her to learn, she has to attain a certain proficiency in a knowledge of ordinary subjects such as are taught girls of Western nations occupying a similar social position to her own. Not only must she take a certain degree of responsibility in the household, but she must see that the tea—which plays so important a part in Japanese social life—is made for the guests who may be visiting her parents.

A very pleasing custom which prevails in the house of all, save families of the highest rank, is for the eldest

daughter to serve the tea to visitors herself; and even in families of the upper classes, if it is desired to especially honour a guest, the meal is served not with the family but separately for the master of the house and his guest, who are waited upon by the wife or eldest daughter of the house. Thus it is that girls of even the highest social position are generally conversant with all matters relating to the proper serving and arrangement of a meal. And should her parents be absent when the guests arrive, it is the duty of the eldest daughter, and after her of the others, to entertain the visitors until her father or mother returns. In the homes of even the wealthy and aristocratic the daughters of the house perform a considerable part of the smaller and lighter forms of house work; and though the Japanese dwelling has practically no furniture, carpets, pictures, or superfluous ornaments to be cared for, no fireplaces or stoves, and but in very few cases windows to be washed or cleaned, there is still a good deal of work to be done to keep the home in the spotless condition and perfect order which generally distinguishes it.

It is in the performance of these various duties that the young girl learns to fit herself for the taking over of the cares of a household of her own when the time for her to do so arrives. Every morning there are the beds, not to be made, as in European countries, but to be rolled up and stored away in the *fukuro dana*, or cupboards contrived for the purpose; and the mosquito nets have to be taken down, and the various rooms swept, dusted and aired before breakfast-time. Afterwards the *engawa* or veranda, which runs along the outside of a Japanese house, forming the space between the *shoji* or paper screens that take the place of windows, and the *amado* or sliding shutters on the outside edge of the veranda, which are only closed at night, or when it is raining and a high wind is blowing, has to be washed or polished. After breakfast there is the usual



work of the household, consisting of washing-up, cleaning pots and pans, and preparing for the next meal to be done; and then later in the day the lady of the house, or one of the daughters, will probably do the marketing.

It is far more the custom in Japan than in England for various vendors of fish, fruits, vegetables, pickles, etc., to come to the door with these articles; and it is quite possible in the suburbs of a large town to do almost all one's shopping at home without the trouble of visiting the town. After the provisions of the day have been purchased, the ladies of the household are at liberty to sit down quietly to needlework, letter-writing, painting, or studying, as the taste of the individual may be.

In all Japanese households where the family is of any size there is a great deal of sewing to be done, for not only have many of the dresses worn to be taken to pieces before they can be successfully washed, but a large part of the clothes of Japanese women of even the upper middle classes are made by their own fingers, and the women of the lower classes, week in week out, find plenty to do in picking to pieces the clothing of the household for the wash, remaking it, turning, dyeing, and renovating the various garments as they become shabby, until, indeed, amongst the poorer classes there is often ultimately but very little of the original articles left.

Washing in Japan is a very different operation to washing in England. Much of it is done (as is the case on the Continent) out of doors, and instead of the steam and pungent odours of soap which arise from the British wash-tub, and turns many a Western laundry into a place of indisputable unhealthiness, the Japanese housewife and laundress use plenty of cold water and no soap, and yet manage to get the clothes as clean as their European sisters. In place of ironing, cotton garments are hung up on a bamboo pole passed through the armholes, and are

pulled smooth and straight before they dry. Whilst silken garments, which are almost invariably taken to pieces before washing, are smoothed out upon a long washing-board whilst wet, and are then set up, stretched on the board, in the sun to dry. A Japanese laundry is often a very picturesque spot, situated in the tree-shaded courtyard of a house near a well or running stream, from which plenty of water for the cleansing operation can be obtained.

In addition to being able to wash her clothes and those of her sisters and brothers, the Japanese girl has to know how to prepare many of the simpler dishes which form the backbone of Japanese meals. The proper cooking of rice, which forms the staple food of the poorer and even the lower middle-class household, is an art in itself, and is so important, indeed, that a woman who marries and cannot cook rice to her husband's satisfaction is liable to be sent back to her parents!

Then, in addition to the cooking of rice, the Japanese girl must learn to make the various varieties of soups which figure in the average Japanese menu, and she must also know how to prepare *mochi*, the rice dough which is used at the New Year, and is sent as a present to friends and others on festival occasions. And not only must she know how to prepare the food as we have indicated, but she must also acquire the knowledge of serving it daintily and appetisingly ere she is considered to have fitted herself for the duties and responsibilities of married life. But if the Japanese girl has many things to learn in connection with household management, in the early years of her life her days are by no means devoid of pleasures and recreations, and on the whole her life may be said to be a remarkably happy one.

There are two ceremonies in connection with the more or less religious part of the little Japanese girl's life which deserve mention. Three times during her life does she

visit the temple to seek the blessings of the god under whose protection she is placed. On the first occasion she is carried there as a baby; on the second she toddles there at three years of age, when her hair, which has previously been shaved into fancy patterns, is allowed to grow naturally for the ultimate and elaborate coiffure of girlhood; and the third time she visits the temple at the age of seven, when she adopts the stiff wide *obi*, which is the pride of Japanese womanhood, in place of the soft and narrow engirdling sash of childhood.

It is on the 15th of November in each year that these ceremonies take place, and the scene at one of the larger temples on that day, when hundreds of gaily dressed, smiling and happy children throng the courts in company with their parents, intent upon the visit to the temple and the making of the requisite offerings, is one of the prettiest and most interesting imaginable.

Little boys also visit the temple at the ages of three and five years, for the purpose of seeking the blessing and further protection of the god into whose care they were commended at their *miya mairi* of babyhood. The first occasion is when the little boy goes to give thanks; and the second is when he goes back to the temple, wearing for the first time the manly *hakama* or pleated trousers.

Thus it is on the 15th of November of each year crowds of little girls and boys of three years old, really hardly more than babies, go clattering along boldly on their clogs with bigger boys and girls who are there to commemorate, in the case of the first, the donning of *hakama*, and, in the case of the second, the first wearing of the *obi*, forming a picture of much charm and colour and kaleidoscopic interest. The children with their smiling faces and graceful ways dominate everything, and seem, indeed, to thrust quite into the background for the nonce



the elders who accompany them. It is a children's festival, and just as in Western countries the religious observances have also a material side of junketing and feasting, so one finds the temple precincts crowded with all the sweetmeat-sellers, and the toy merchants, and vendors of other trifles. In the trees and on poles flags fly gaily, drums are beaten, and one hears the curious sounds emitted by the toy trumpets which children blow.

In a pavilion near the temple itself there is a *kagura* dance in progress, which is watched by a crowd of chattering, laughing, smiling, and gesticulating children, on whose little round faces and in whose twinkling, shining eyes can be read a positive ecstasy of enjoyment. Up and down the steps which lead to the temple itself passes an unending procession of little ones ascending and descending; whilst within the temple white-robed priests are engaged in the ceremonies from morning till night. In the vestibule to the shrine itself, where there is a priest to receive them, groups of children make their offerings, and await their turn to pass in. And whilst they wait they can hear the droning utterances of the priests, and, when this comes at last to an end, they pass into the sanctuary to take the place of the other children who have just finished their worship, and receive the amulet which is the record and reward of their attendance.

And then there remains for the little ones no more ceremony—nothing but pleasure, and so they pass out into the temple grounds to take part in the simple games, to purchase souvenirs of the occasion, to watch the dancing, and ultimately to go home, a tired but happy throng, for whom the day will for a long time be a pleasant memory.

Of course, the little Japanese girl has plenty of dolls, and the great girls' festival of the year is the Feast of Dolls, which takes place on the third day of the third month and lasts for three days. But though these days may be well

called the apotheosis of doll-dom, dolls play an important part in the amusements of the children of Japan, as all those of other lands, throughout the year. And there are many other games and kinds of toys beloved of Japanese children, some of them only played or used at stated seasons of the year, and others in favour all the year round. At the New Year one of the most popular outdoor games is battledore and shuttlecock, and many a pretty picture is formed in the gardens of the rich and the little courtyards of the poor, at street corners, and in the open spaces and parks, by groups of the girls in their bright-hued, wide-sleeved dresses playing this game.

The little Japanese girl is a singularly charming and elf-like creature, whose graceful movements in playing the various games to which they are addicted provides not the least pleasant of many charming sights in the land of the chrysanthemum. The extraordinary agility with which they bend and turn and spring about, though wearing the awkward-looking, high, lacquered clogs, can never fail to be a source of wonderment to all Western beholders.

Then there are several games played with balls ; and many a Japanese child has a dexterity in catching balls, and even in manipulating two or three of them at one and the same time, which would not do discredit to a juggler. Hide-and-seek is an almost world-wide pastime, and there is, of course, a Japanese variety of this exciting and mirth-provoking sport.

In addition to the games we have mentioned there are many English and American outdoor sports and pastimes which have been adopted by the youngsters of modern Japan, such as lawn tennis, tennis, basket ball, and various more or less athletic games, such as running, jumping, etc. And in the races great ingenuity is often shown in the devising of some new and graceful development of them.

Among the sports which are great favourites with



BABIES ARE CARRIED ON THE BACKS OF SISTERS  
OR LITTLE NURSEMAIDS.





children is one which would appear to be the Japanese equivalent of an English egg-and-spoon race. It consists of balancing a ball on a narrow-shaped battledore, made of some hard wood, whilst running between two points. When one remembers how difficult it is to do this with a spoon-shaped receptacle, one marvels to see even tiny children balancing the ball upon this flat and slippery surface whilst running at a smart trot.

Then another pretty sport which one sees occasionally at children's festivals is as follows: Four bare poles of a suitable height are driven into the ground at some distance, say a hundred yards from the starting-point, and at the latter are laid upon the ground four branches of real or artificial cherry-blossom—according to the season of the year—and four pieces of ribbon for each competitor. At a given signal each girl picks up one branch of the cherry-blossom and a piece of ribbon and runs to one of the poles, to which she ties it. This is repeated four times, until all the branches have been fastened in place, the winner being the girl who first succeeds in attaching her four branches of cherry-blossom to her pole.

Of the indoor games, of which there are many, one of the most popular, and at the same time instructive, is that known as *Hyaku ninisshu*, which means the "poems of a hundred poets." There are two hundred cards to a complete pack for playing this game, and on each card is printed either the first or last half of one of the hundred noted Japanese poems which are well known to all Japanese of whatever station in life. All Japanese poems are very short, containing only thirty-one syllables, and they divide quite naturally into two parts. The method of playing the game is as follows: Half the number of cards, which contain the latter halves of the poems, are dealt out amongst the players and are laid face upwards before them; the remaining hundred cards, which contain the

first halves of the poems, are handed to the person who has been selected to act as reader. His duty is to draw a card from the pack in his hand and read the line which is written on it, the players having to remember the line which follows the one read and is found upon the cards which have been dealt out as equally as possible. Each player not only watches his own cards but also those of his fellow-players, with a view of immediately picking up that which completes the poem read by the reader and laying it aside. If another player sees the card first, he can take it (much, indeed, as one does in the well-known English game of "Snap"), and, having done this, he hands to the careless player, who has overlooked the fact that the end of the poem was to be found amongst his own cards, several cards from his own hand. The winner of the game is he or she who first gets rid of all his cards. Very frequently the game is played by two lots of players, who arrange themselves in two lines down the centre of a room, and the sides play against each other, the winner being that side which first disposes of all its cards. The game is not only an interesting but an instructive one, teaching quickness of thought and motion, and imparting to the little Japanese who play it a knowledge of some of the great national classical poems.

It is surprising how considerable a knowledge even quite young children have of their national poetry. It would not be an easy matter to play a similar game in England with quotations from one or other of the great English poets, except with unusually cultured adults for players.

The children of Japan are as well, if not better, provided with fairy tales as those of other lands, and more especially in the cold winter evenings, when they and other members of the family are gathered round the charcoal fire or *kotatsu*, with their feet and knees tucked for warmth



under the quilt which is spread on a wooden frame above the brazier, are these fairy tales told to them by either nurse, grandmother, or older brothers or sisters. And the Japanese children, as do the little ones of other lands, cower or shiver, or laugh and smile as they listen to these tales of wonderful palaces of the sea-gods and river-gods and spirit-beings of the woods and mountains, or of monsters of terrible mien. The marvellous adventures of Momontaro, in his fights with the Oni, also never fail to interest and even entrance the younger members of the party; and, indeed, this fairy-tale hero, which may perhaps be considered the Japanese "Jack and the Bean-stalk," usually remains the hero of the children until they are old enough to be told and to understand the daring exploits of the real heroes whose deeds are enshrined in national history.

The theatre, too, also plays a not unimportant part in the amusements and even the instruction of the Japanese girl and boy, and an all-day visit to it, which to us might seem to be pregnant with boredom and fatigue, is one of the great pleasures of the youthful Japanese; where, seated on the floor, in a kind of box shut off from those adjoining it, little boys and girls witness, in company with their parents and brothers and sisters, the heroic historical plays which are indeed, nowadays, almost the sole survivals of old Japan. Here, whilst she learns something of the spirit of undying loyalty and devotion which belonged to those far-off days, and witnesses the self-sacrifice and self-abnegation which the heroines of these plays invariably exhibit, she herself—though shaken in turn by laughter and paroxysms of keenly felt horror and fear—yet learns in a very vivid way the spirit which animated her feminine ancestors of long ago, which spirit must also animate her if she herself would be a worthy and well-esteemed descendant of these heroines of old Japan.

It is whilst surrounded by the influences, duties, and amusements such as we have described that the girls of Japan, who, at the age of sixteen, are often charming women of the world in the best sense of that phrase—pure, sweet, amiable, and possessed of a great power of self-control, and an astounding knowledge of how to act tactfully on all occasions—grow up to womanhood.

And although the higher side of her nature, as we Westerns esteem it, has been little developed, and no obvious religious teaching or truths have surrounded her soul with a clearer and higher atmosphere, she has nevertheless still much of the unconscious and beautiful spirit of childhood still remaining in her, and is almost always free from those meretricious social ambitions by which so many of her Western sisters are beset when they emerge from childhood to womanhood.

With the Japanese girl there is no thought of a career of conquest and flirtation which is to end ultimately in a fine or successful marriage, the basis of which may be either love or money as her upbringing or temperament dictates. Of these things, indeed, she takes little thought, for she knows that when the time comes for her to preside over her own household her father will have arranged for her to meet some suitable young man, and that she and he, when thus brought together, will know for what reason it is and will make up their minds to marry and to do their duty by each other. And thus until that time arrives the Japanese girl, who is modest and of good repute, indulges in no flirtations and concerns herself very little with thoughts of the other sex, except to regard them as beings on a higher plane than herself, whose wishes must be deferred to and upon whom she is expected to wait.

The highest lesson she has learned, and upon which she is taught to act, is that of obedience, at first to her father, and then to her husband; and whatever may be



BABY OFTEN EXPLORES THE GREENSWARD  
OF THE PARK OR GARDEN.



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thought of this system by her more emancipated sisters of Europe and America, the teaching to which she has listened throughout her life has at least produced a bright, industrious, sweet-tempered, and charming type of womanhood, and has ensured a self-sacrificing wife and mother, and an able and charming mistress of the household.

But all the same one must admit that with the end of childhood the happiest and brightest period in the life of average Japanese woman comes to an end; for she passes from a home where her training, however strict and repressive it has been, yet has come from the hands of kind and deeply affectionate parents, and just at a time when her mind broadens and the desire for deeper knowledge and self-improvement arises, the checks on this and the restrictions placed upon her become more severe.

In her childhood she has enjoyed more freedom than is found in any other Eastern land; and now when she has entered womanhood her sphere is suddenly narrowed and difficulties increase, and the young girl, who has probably in most cases looked forward upon life and the future with joyous expectancy and hope, may, in the course of a few years, become a weary and even broken-hearted woman. But it is only fair to say that there are numberless households, more especially in the Japan of to-day, where much of the joy anticipated by the girl is found by the woman in those duties and pleasures which fall to her lot.

## CHAPTER VI

### FESTIVALS, QUAIN'T, PATHETIC, AND BEAUTIFUL

JAPAN may not inaccurately be described as a land of festivals. In it throughout the year are many quaint and beautiful celebrations for old folk and young, when the national spirit, *Yamato Damashii*, "the Soul of Japan," finds expression in its love of beauty and artistic display.

Not only first, but chief of all, in the hearts of the people at large is the great festival of the New Year. It is one in which all classes join, from the highest prince of the Mikado's Court to the poorest outcast of a Tōkyō slum. Worries and cares of all kinds are, for a time at least, cast aside with the close of the old year, and the first rays of the new year's sun heralds a season of brightness and joy for the children. The festival lasts almost a week, and the holiday spirit survives throughout the month, leading to a succession of festivals and amusements in which in their various ways all can join. From early morning till bedtime the children wear their best and prettiest clothes, and play in them secure against rebuke. Relatives and guests come and go, bearing wonderful gifts of sweetmeats and toys for the younger members of the family, and suitable presents for their elders.

As may be easily understood, so lengthy, great, and universal a festival entails much forethought. Before December is half through the preparations for the great New Year's Festival are being made in almost every



household in Japan. In the large ones much time and thought are given to them; and the head of the family finds her hands over-full with the varied duties which are necessitated by the "spring cleaning" of her house, Christmas, New Year, and Thanksgiving festivities. The work of renewing and replenishing the family wardrobe is no light task, as every member of the household, whether man, woman, or child, must be provided with new clothes. So, as the truly industrious housewife would scorn to put any of the sewing out, and tailors and dress-makers are not so much employed as in England or America, the work of cutting-out and making-up the various garments is started in good time.

In former times it was the custom to set aside the 8th of December as a "Needle Festival." On this day all women did no sewing, but amused themselves by indulging in the form of recreation which their individual taste dictated, instead of attending on their husbands, fathers, or brothers, as they were usually bound to do. This festival was supposed to indicate the divisional line between the old year's work and the new year's. But nowadays it is less observed, and, in fact, the industry of the average Japanese housewife impels her to end the old and commence the new considerably earlier in the month so as to get the necessary sewing, entailed by the provision of new garments for herself and the other members of the family, finished, or at least well advanced, ere the house-cleaning (which is usually begun on or before the fifteenth of the month) claims her undivided attention.

After the latter is done the preparation of the food for the New Year's Festival must be seen to. It is then that the universal *mochi* has to be made. And, although only a sort of dumpling made of rice which has been steamed and pounded, its making entails so complicated and

lengthy a process that it becomes almost a ceremony by itself.

After the supply of *mochi* (which has in large families to be a big one) is made it is put carefully away until required for the festival. Then the elaborate and quaint decorations, which form so interesting and picturesque a part of the celebration of the New Year in Japan, have to be seen to. At every gate or doorway will be seen some token of the season. At those of the poorer people it may be only a pine branch (*kadomatsu*, "gate pine-tree") stuck in the ground, a few flowers, or merely a piece of rope made of plaited straw adorned with paper *gohei*. Before the gateway of the rich are true *kadomatsu*, in which are intertwined plum branches and bamboo twigs. But this is not only a decoration; it is an emblem with a lesson, which is enshrined in the Buddhist saying regarding it which runs: *Kadomatsu meido no tabi no Ichirizuka*; that is to say, the *kadomatsu* indicates another milestone on the journey of life towards the Meido; or that each New Year's Festival should be remembered as the completion of another stage upon the unceasing journey towards life's end.

All three trees, which are thus joined in a symbolic lesson, have an individual meaning; the pine has many in the Japanese mind. The most generally accepted is that of endurance and the power to flourish even in the face of misfortune, amid the storms of the mountain summits and the keen winds and snows of winter. And thus, just as the pine-tree always retains its foliage, so the strong and true man always keeps his courage and his power to endure in days of adversity. The inward significance of the bamboo is a riddle. There are two Chinese characters, one meaning the joint of the bamboo, and the other faithfulness, virtue, and constancy. Both words are pronounced *setsu*, and the name is frequently bestowed on Japanese







A DAINTY FIGURE STANDING BY SOME CALM LAKE.

maidens. The plum-tree signifies sweetness of disposition or heart.

The *kadomatsu* is not, however, invariably made up of pine, bamboo, and plum. Sometimes *sakaki*, the sacred plant of Shintōists, is used in place of the last named. At others only the pine and bamboo are found in the *kadomatsu*.

The more elaborately decorated houses have their doorways or gateways almost hidden in *kadomatsu*, which form veritable archways. Across the latter is suspended a rope woven of grass, which, though supposed to be hanging there with the object of preventing evil spirits and unclean things from crossing the threshold, yet by the facile adaptation of mythical symbolism to convenience is always sufficiently high above the ground to enable visitors and others to pass beneath it without stooping. The centre of this arch is often found occupied by a group of several objects, prominent amongst them is the crimson *yebi* or crayfish, set amid *yushuri* boughs, on which the old and new leaves grow together, symbolising the flourishing of the parents and children together. The mystical meaning of the *yebi* with its "crooked" back is the aged bent with many years. Also found in the centre of the arch are the graceful leaves of the *moromoki* or *urajiro* (ferns), the emblematic meaning of which is a hope of a numerous posterity, even as the fern has many branches, and of conjugal life as indicated by the leaves springing from the stem in pairs. Another item found generally in the decorative scheme are brilliant-hued *daidai* (bitter oranges), the meaning of which is derived from the Chinese word *daidai*, signifying "from generation to generation," or, "may the family flourish for ever."

Beside the *daidai*—and in strong contrast to its colour—is generally placed a piece of charcoal, called *sumi*. This is meant, from the fact that charcoal is an unalterable

substance whose colour cannot change, to be a symbol of changelessness. And even as the charcoal does not alter, so may the fortunes and happiness of loved ones remain immutable in all that tends to prosperity and joy.

Seaweed also frequently appears in these New Year's decorations. The *honta-wara* is indicative of good fortune. Its emblematic significance dates back to the reign of the Empress Jimmu at the beginning of the third century A.D. When her troops were encamped on the seashore during the campaign against Korea their horses were in danger of dying from want of fodder, but the ingenious mind of the empress conceived the idea of causing the *honta-wara* to be gathered and used for that purpose. The legend goes that the animals, refreshed by the strange meal, recovered their spirits and strength, and the soldiers of the empress gained a great victory. Ever since then the *honta-wara* has been with the Japanese a symbol significant of good luck.

Another item which is generally found in the decorations of all, save the poorest, is a square piece of white paper, called *fukutso-sumi*, which is held in by a piece of red and white string, known as *midsu shiki*, and is used to indicate a present. It may be best described as a lucky bag, in which are placed eatables, etc.—such as herring-roe, *kazu-no-ko*; roasted chestnuts, *kachiguri*; *torreya diospyrus*, seeds used for making sweets, and known as *kazo-no-tane*.

A quaint and pretty decoration which is also sometimes used takes the form of a miniature ship of plaited straw called *daikoko buné*, with a cargo of miniature sacks of grain, bits of foliage, and tiny ornaments symbolic of the presentation of first-fruits.

Of all the decorations used at the New Year's celebrations the *shimenawa*, or straw rope, which is placed across the entrance, is most complicated in its symbolism.



It first appears in that most picturesque legend of the Sun Goddess who, when tempted by the ingenuity of the gods to come out of the cave into which she had retired, was prevented from returning by a straw rope stretched across the mouth of the cavern. The *shimenawa*, which may be of any size, must be so twisted that the twist goes to the left; the pure or fortunate side in ancient Japanese philosophy, traceable, perhaps, to the old belief (still prevalent amongst the ignorant in Europe) that the left is the heart side. The tufts of straw dependent from the rope must have different numbers of straws in them, according to their position. They begin with the number three, the second contains five straws, the third seven, the fourth three again, and so on. The hanging *gohei*, which alternate with the tufts of straw, have also their origin in the legend of the Sun Goddess; but they in addition represent offerings of cloth formerly made to the gods in accordance with a custom now long discontinued. To this *shimenawa* are often attached the fern leaves, bitter oranges, *yuzuri* leaves, and charcoal, to which we have already made reference.

In addition to the great *shimenawa* or *shimekazari* (the latter a purely decorative rope to which emblems are attached) others of less size are hung above the *toko*, or alcoves, in each room; and over the back gate, or over the entrance to the veranda of the second storey is placed a *wajime*, which is a small, decorated straw rope twisted into a wreath-like ornament.

Within the house itself, in the highest seat or place of honour of the best room, are set out great cakes of *mochi*—two, three, five, or seven in number—one upon another in a large dish, which itself is covered with fern leaves and surrounded by seaweed. But the great display is in the decorations of the God-shelf or *kamidana*. Before the domestic shrine, which is made lovely and fragrant with flowers, a *shimekazari* in miniature, and sprays of *sakaki*

(*Cleyera japonica*) are placed large double rice cakes; a *tai*, the "king of fishes"; a string of cash; slices of salted cuttlefish; *kabu*, turnips; *jinbaso*, or "the Seaweed of the Horse of the God"; *kombu*, the symbol of pleasure and joy; and *mochibana*, which are artificial flowers formed from rice-flour and straws.

Then there is the *sambō*, the curiously-shaped little stool or table on which offerings made to the Shintō gods are placed. These consist of bitter oranges, *mochi* cakes, rice, *chikara-iwai*, "strength-rice-bread"; black peas, and a fine lobster or crayfish. The *sambō* and its offerings are placed before each visitor to the house, who, saluting them with a prostration, shows not only his sincere wish that all the good fortune of which the articles upon the *sambō* are symbolical may bless the family, but also his reverence for the gods of the household.

There are many other curious, interesting, and ancient customs prevalent in connection with the New Year's festivities, but we have no space in which to describe them. Most are picturesque, some even highly artistic, and almost without exception they possess a hidden meaning which keeps their observance ever fresh in the Japanese heart and mind.

Of all the towns in Japan none is better than Matsue in which to observe the New Year. There many customs still survive which have, for one reason or another, fallen into desuetude in many other parts of the Empire. The streets are wonderfully decorated with Japanese flags, white with the crimson disc which is the emblem of the Land of the Rising Sun, whilst the same arresting spot of vivid colour appears upon the sides of countless lanterns, which after sunset glow with a soft, pale light like trembling moons. Festooned along the sides of the houses are endless multitudes of *shimenawa* or *shimekazari*, which are so interwoven that they present the appearance of one inter-







AN IDYLL.

minable rope, with its numberless straw pendants and fluttering paper *gohei*.

And what is true of the decorations of Matsue is true also, to a more or less degree, of those of other cities and towns throughout the Japanese Empire. The streets are thronged in every town and village and are full of exuberant life. Amid the pedestrians, who stand in knots and groups admiring and criticising the decorations, push the happy-faced, clean-limbed *kurumaya*, conscious of their new winter livery, dragging happy fathers, mothers, and laughing, merry-eyed children who are all bent on crowding the maximum of innocent enjoyment into the minimum of time.

All kinds of strolling actors and musicians and dancers provide entertainment at the street corners, or go from house to house in search of employment. And at one's door the *manzai* is almost certain to appear, with his quaint undertaking to drive out all the devils who may possibly have been dwelling in the house during the past year by means of his dances, contortions, and songs. Whether many of the Japanese really believe in the efficacy of the *manzai's* ministrations it is not easy to decide; but he finds plenty of employers, who may after all be only amused by his grimaces and *gaku*; which latter, though the word may be freely translated as "music," needs a bad "ear" and considerable self-restraint to enable one to enjoy it.

Every garden is turned into a little fête ground, in which the small boys and girls of the household play. The latter, with their faces freshly daubed with white paint, their glossy black hair neatly done, and their wide-sleeved *kimono* gorgeous with many colours, play battledore and shuttlecock, pat balls wound round with shining silk to and fro, or toss tiny bags half-filled with rice in the air and catch them again, mostly singing a weird little chant-like song the while.

Nor do the boys fail also to enjoy themselves. For them there are kites of fascinating and curious shapes and colours; tops which they spin under the pedestrians' feet in the streets, well aware that at such a time the greatest liberties may be taken with impunity, and that few passers-by will fail to smile or even turn aside to add to children's pleasure. Even the very horses, that are seldom otherwise than small, ill-tempered beasts, with rough, shaggy manes, which bear heavy burdens with many vicious snaps and lurches in the direction of their masters and passers-by, are decked out gaily with parti-coloured streamers that reach almost to the ground and are finished off at the ends with small tinkling bells.

Almost every day of the festival, which begins with the rising of the New Year's sun and does not really end for fifteen days, although most of the decorations are taken down long before, has its own special food, and its distinctive festival duty and observance. Even the wearing of particular clothes is a matter of custom; for example, every one wears the best they possess for the first three days of the festival; then till the seventh day the second best are worn; and from that time till the end of the month of January new garments, though not the very best, are the rule. To call on every one of his friends and acquaintances within the first seven days is the duty of Japanese men; but doubtless on account of the many duties and claims upon their time which fall to the lot of the women of the household, they are given an extension of time up till the end of February in which to complete their New Year's calls.

Presents play an important part in Japanese life, and at no time is there so much present-giving as at the New Year and just before it. Upon the housewife devolves the duty of despatching or giving presents to every one who during the year has been of the slightest assistance to her





THE STREETS OF ALMOST EVERY TOWN ARE WONDERFULLY DECORATED.

All present-giving is a severe tax not only upon the household exchequer, but also upon the memory and tact of the housewife, lest any one should be forgotten or an adequate present not be sent. Indeed, she must feel at the end of the New Year's festivities much as did the American, who said that if he survived the month of March he somehow felt like living on right through the year!

The outward signs of Japanese festivals, or *matsuri*, present the most unsolvable of enigmas to those who see them for the first time. Indeed, a sympathetic appreciation of many of the symbolic meanings of the decorations which meet the eye on every hand on such occasions must remain impossible until a long and intimate acquaintance with the people, or the schooling of some deeply initiated friend, serves to solve the puzzle.

These almost always artistic holiday decorations are totally different to anything seen in Western lands; each flower, twig, scrap of paper, twist of straw, possesses a subtle meaning founded upon some radical idea of the national religion, or upon some legend or tradition. A meaning which every Japanese child has at his or her finger ends, but which is destined to remain perhaps for ever inscrutable to the Western mind.

But those who wish to more than scratch upon the surface of the life of Japan, and the feelings which actuate and possess the people, must at least learn the inward significance of the more frequent and common festival emblems and the symbolic meanings attached to them.

For centuries past the Japanese have used the various emblems of festivity in graceful, artistic, and decorative ways. They are applied to all kinds of useful as well as merely ornamental articles, and appear in metal and lacquer work; on the *kiseru*, little tobacco pipes, tobacco boxes and pouches, on porcelain, and even upon the

humblest domestic utensils of black and vermilion *papier-mâché*.

The application of these emblems to the ordinary things of life may, in fact, be said to be almost universal; and the very figures, the meaning of which seems so perfectly obvious—those beautiful representations of birds, animals, or floral life with which most Westerners are nowadays familiar—all possess some hidden symbolism or ethical value which is only apparent to the initiated.

Thus the graceful sprays of bamboo, the lobster, sprigs of pine with flights of birds, the pair of storks which are seen on every hand in Japan on the *fusama* of hotels, on the paper screens in houses, are emblems, of which the full meaning is known to every Japanese, but whose significance is probably not learned by one per cent. of the foreigners who visit the country as tourists.

Next perhaps in importance to the Festival of the New Year, and far excelling it in poetical beauty and significance, is that of Bommatsuri or Bonku, or Festival of the Dead, which some Europeans call the Feast of Lanterns. It takes place from the 13th to the 15th of July; there are two such feasts annually, but those who hold to the ancient method of reckoning time by moons consider that the Bommatsuri should fall on the thirteenth to fifteenth days of the seventh month of that calendar, which is at a later period of the year than the month of July.

This beautiful festival, although nowadays a Buddhist institution, is so closely modelled upon the ancient Shintō Feast of the Dead that it is difficult to determine whether Buddhist or Shintōist ideas actually now predominate.

On the night preceding Bommatsuri, the Bon-ichi, or Market of the Dead, is held, which is a scarcely less interesting and picturesque event than the festival itself. In this strange market are sold all the various things required



for the due observance of the latter : the foods of different kinds which must be offered to the returned ghosts ; the peculiar lanterns ; the decorations with which each household shrine of devout Buddhists and every temple altar will be beautified and enriched.

In the narrow street of the market we have in mind there are a myriad lights ; so many, indeed, that the brightness of the stars, shining in the clear, narrow strip of sky which seems to hang overhead between the houses, pale. Lanterns, torches, and other flaming things illuminate rows of hastily erected stalls and booths, which have been placed in front of the permanent shops on both sides of the way. Between these in every town moves a dense throng, chattering and bargaining ; with a harsh clatter of *geta*, which at times drowns the murmurous sound of voices, and even the strident shouts of the sellers. But it is a Japanese crowd. One that marvellously succeeds in preserving in the mass the politeness which one always obtains from the individual. There is no pushing, no hustling, no sounds of imprecations, no sense of stress and struggle to obtain the best positions to see the many interesting things which are displayed.

In the thick of the crowd one finds the sellers of the long white rods, which are peeled hempsticks, of which the thin ends are usually broken up into *hashi* for the beloved ghosts, and the rest burned in the *mukaebi* or welcoming fires.

"*Ogara ! Ogara-ya !*" cry the sellers of the sheaves of white rods, and the poorer people buy them. The rich use the pine branches, which are the prescribed wood, but which from their scarcity are too costly for the poor in many parts of Japan.

There are also to be seen the vendors of the lotus flowers and leaves. The former for the beautification of the altars and tombs ; the latter used for wrapping up the

food for the returned spirits. *Hasu-no-hana* is the cry which attracts the attention of would-be purchasers. A soft cry, which seems to plead for admiration of the exquisite blossoms as they stand upon the stalls in great bunches, supported by bamboo framework.

Then there is an immense sale for the *karawake* or shallow dishes of red, unglazed earthenware, in which ~~are~~<sup>is</sup> placed the food for the beloved ghosts. These are of a pattern so old that Buddha himself found it existent ; now only used for this one kind of pottery.

Other things which will be found in every market on the night before Bommatsuri are the beautiful scarlet and white tassels made of strings of rice grains, looking like fine bead-work. Exquisite paper decorations for the *batsuma*. Sticks of incense; long, brittle, chocolate-coloured rods about as thick as a thin slate pencil. Of all qualities and at all prices, from a few *sen* to a *yen* for a bundle ; all tied together with strips of coloured and gilt paper.

At other stalls will be found the sprigs and branches of *misohagi*, and of *shikimi* (anise); and at yet others the freshly woven mats of rice straw, gleaming white and spotless, for use in front of the *batsumas* and upon the altars. Here, too, are the *warauma*, or little horses made of straw, which a fanciful people provide for the beloved ghosts to ride ; and *waraushi*, or tiny oxen, made of the same material, which will work for them.

But of all things, perhaps the most wonderful as well as beautiful are the "Bon" lanterns ; made especially to light the feet of the shortly returning ghosts. They are of all shapes and sizes ; some like stars that will glow with the steady light of planets in the dark firmament of temple courts and gardens ; others hexagonal like the lanterns of the shrines ; some will hang like luminous eggs ; and yet others will be of the shape of flowers. On their paper sides artists have traced exquisite drawings of lotus blooms, and

most are further beautified with long streamers of white or fringes of coloured paper. The great white moon-shaped lanterns, which shed a soft, silvery effulgence, are for use in the cemeteries.

Then there are sellers of all kinds of artificial flowers, which in their beautiful trickery of making deceive one into a belief in their reality. Lotus and chrysanthemum blooms; the leaves, the buds, and the blossoms.

But this strange market is not alone for things for the use of the beloved ghosts. Into it have pressed other traders (what wonder?) who do a brisk business in crickets, confined in tiny cages of bamboo; fire-flies in others covered with brown mosquito netting. There are toys too, of various kinds; but the chief trade is in the hands of those who cater for the shadowy visitors of the morrow and two succeeding days.

The neighbouring temple, which at dusk stood up silhouetted, as though cut out of grey-black paper, against the lemon-coloured sky, will long ere the market throngs become illuminated by hundreds of beautiful lanterns; many of them shaped like gigantic lotus flowers, so exquisitely perfect in every detail that they look like radiant pinky-white real blossoms, lighted by the tiny oil-lamp of baked clay which glows in their hearts.

Soon the resonant clanging of the temple gong draws crowds of worshippers up the flights of steps leading to the temple. To-night is not only the Market of the Dead, but the festival of *Yakushi-Nyora*, who is the Physician of Souls.

Up the temple steps throughout the land will crowd the faithful to cast their offerings into the great alms-chests, and to send up prayers. The clang of *geta* and *komageta* on the stone steps and flags of the courtyards of the temples, drowning the hum of voices and the prattle of delighted little ones carried by their parents or elder sisters and brothers, amid the exquisite glow of many lanterns.



The living stream will go on until the lights in the street, where the Market of the Dead is, begin to shine less brightly as they flicker out one by one, which is a sign that the homeward journey must be commenced, for there are three days of solemn festival rites to come.

But to witness the Bommatsuri itself in its most picturesque and impressive form, it is nowadays necessary to journey into the more remote villages; for although the feast is still one of the most important in the cities, it is in the villages that it is carried out with the most ancient and picturesque rites. And of all observances of Bommatsuri those in the villages on the shores of the Inland Sea are the most affecting in their picturesque and poetical beauty and naïve simplicity.

In many portions of the Empire the different families visit the graveyards on the day previous to the commencement of the festival, to clean the tombstones and put the graves in order, so that the returning ghosts may find everything well cared for. Flowers in fresh water are placed in front of each tombstone, and sometimes also offerings of rice and fresh vegetables. And early in the morning of the 13th of July, new mats of purest rice straw, woven especially for the occasion, are spread upon all Buddhist altars, and within each *butsuma* or *butsudan*, the tiny household shrine before which each morning and evening prayers are offered up in every believing home.

The temple altars and shrines are also beautifully embellished with colour paper, and with flowers and sprigs of certain sacred plants—freshly gathered branches of *shikimi* (anise), *misohagi* (lespedeza), and real lotus blossoms when they can be procured. But if for any reason the latter are unobtainable, then imitation paper ones are substituted, which are often made with such perfection of art as at a little distance to be quite undistinguishable from the reality. Upon the altar itself a tiny lacquered *zen*—a table such as

Japanese meals are served on—is placed, and the offerings of food are put upon it. But in the smaller domestic shrines it is more usually the custom to place the offerings upon the rice matting wrapped in fresh-gathered lotus leaves. Sometimes the offerings are only *O-sho-gin-gu*, or Honourable Uncooked Food; at others, and more frequently, they are *O-rio-gu*, or Honourable Boiled Food. Various things are comprised in these two classes of offerings: foods resembling vermicelli; *gozen*, which is a kind of boiled rice; egg-plant; and *dango*, a kind of small dumpling. To which are frequently added peaches, plums, and other fruits. Neither fish, meats, or *saké* are offered. Fresh water is placed for the use of the shadowy guests, and is also from time to time sprinkled upon the altar, and within the shrine by means of a branch of *misohagi*. Every hour tea is served; and everything is placed daintily in tiny plates, cups and bowls, with chopsticks laid beside them as for living visitors. And thus for three days the shadowy ghosts of returned ancestors are lovingly entertained.

At sunset, torches made of pine branches are lit before every dwelling to light and guide the beloved returning ghosts. And sometimes when the town or village is situated near the shore of the sea or of a lake, or on the banks of a river, on the first night of the festival *mukabei*, or welcome fires, are lit upon the shore or bank to the number of one hundred and eight. Never more nor less, as this number possesses a mystic Buddhist significance. Every night the most beautiful of lanterns of special shape and colours, exquisitely adorned with paintings of landscapes or flowers, and always decorated by a distinctive fringe made of paper streamers, are hung at the entrance gates of the homes. And on the same night those who have dead relatives or friends betake themselves to the cemeteries, bearing offerings; and there they kneel beside

the graves of the unforgotten dead, praying and burning incense. Before the tombs lanterns are also hung, but these have no figures painted upon them ; and flowers are placed in the vases of bamboo and set beside each *haka*, and fresh water is poured out for the ghosts.

In some of the country districts the Bommatsuri celebrations take place in the middle of August. On the night of the 12th one hears the sounds of children's voices singing, as bands of them, bearing red paper lanterns, come trooping down the narrow winding streets on their way to the graveyards, where their elders are already at work upon the annual cleaning and tidying of the tombs of their ancestors and friends. As the night goes on bonfires illumine the shadow-haunted cemeteries, where often giant cryptomerias loom still more gigantic in the flickering light of the fires which have been lit to guide the returning spirits. Then on each of the succeeding nights, in many places in Japan, it is the custom for all the young people of the particular village to forgather in the courtyard of the temple in grotesque costumes and disguises, and dance to music produced by drums and other primitive instruments, whilst they themselves sing a monotonous chant.

These three nights in the year are anticipated by the peasant girls and peasant lads with great delight, for the festival provides one of the very few occasions during the year on which the sexes meet together for mutual enjoyment. And though the Government, fearing that abuses might grow up out of this almost unique occasion of social intercourse, have sought of recent times to suppress it, in the more rural spots the custom survives, and even still flourishes in places, although the dancing is conducted with greater decorousness than formerly through dread of police interference, and even possible prohibition.

The main object of these dances—excluding the enjoyment of the young people—is the amusement of the spirits



of the departed ancestors, who are believed to be hovering in the temple courtyard precincts.

At every hotel in the country districts where travellers or tourists are staying at Bommatsuri, the proprietor will arrange some form of entertainment, generally a professional story-teller, *geisha*, or a company of strolling musicians, to which all those staying in the house will be invited. And to which every villager, who can by hook or by crook manage to get a foothold sufficiently near to either hear or see what is going on, will crowd. The open house fronts are, of course, all in favour of a large audience, and at such times the village street, or the hotel garden or courtyard, will be thronged with spectators, and from within the house can be seen a living sea of deeply interested faces, across which pass in quick succession all the varied emotions of pleasure, merriment, horror, or grief which the elocutionary art of the story-teller, or the plaintive or humorous singing of the musicians, or beautiful dancing of the *geisha*, evoke.

At sunset, on the last day of the festival, only the offerings known as *segaki* are made in the temples. Then, amid the fading light, which casts long shadows over the courtyards of the temples and scarcely illumines the interiors even dimly, the priests perform the touching ceremony of feeding the ghosts of the terrible Circle of Penance, which is known as *Gakido*, or the Abode of the Hungry Spirits. They also feed the ghosts of those who have no longer living friends to care for them, out of the charity of generous and tender, faithful souls. And though the offerings are small—like those miniature feasts spread before the gods on the *butsudan*—the spirit which actuates the gifts, when there are so many other calls upon the resources of the living, must surely go far to consecrate them.

The origin of this gracious custom lies far back in the

ages, when one Dai-Mokenren, the great disciple of Buddha, was by reason of his great merit permitted to see the soul of his mother in *Gakido*, or the place of the spirits condemned to suffer hunger for the sins of their previous life. When Mokenren saw his mother's sufferings he was greatly distressed, and, filling a bowl with the choicest foods, he sent it to her. But although she sought to refresh herself, whenever she lifted the food to her mouth it changed into fire. Then Mokenren, still more grieved, inquired of Buddha what he could do so that his mother might be spared from further torment. In reply Buddha said, "On the fifteenth day of the seventh month feed the ghosts of the great priests of the whole world." For Mokenren's mother when living had sinned by refusing food to priests in her miserliness. When Mokenren had done this he was permitted to see his mother was no longer in a state of *gaki*, but was dancing for joy.

And it is in commemoration of this act of Dai-Mokenren that the offerings called *segaki* are even now made, and the dances known as *bon-odori* are performed on the evening of the same day throughout Japan.

But upon the night of the 15th of July, the third and last of the Festival of the Dead, there is a still more pathetic, strange, and touching ceremonial, that of farewell. Everything that can be done to please the dead—who in the persons of the beloved returning ghosts have hovered impalpable and unseen, though felt in the graveyards of the hillsides, amid the pines and stately cryptomerias, and where, in some cases, in due season the petals of glossy-leaved camellias will have fallen a blood-red, pink, or snowy shower upon their moss-grown tombs—has been accomplished by the living. The time allowed by the rulers of the unseen worlds for the visits of the spirits to their former earthly dwellings and haunts has nearly expired, and now all that remains to be done is for

their friends to speed them sorrowfully back to the spirit lands.

The preparations have been made in every home, where may be found tiny ships of closely woven barley straw laden with choicest food, and beautified with tiny lanterns, and written messages of faith and love. Into these frail craft—never large, for the beloved ghosts require little room—are woven a world of affectionate sentiment and mystical meaning. And whilst the bonfires still burn and the lanterns are glowing softly in the streets of a myriad towns and villages throughout Japan, these tiny ships are launched on lakes, canals, and rivers, and sent on their voyage from the seashore around the coast, each one with its little lantern shining, like a fire-fly or glow-worm, at the prow, and *senko* burning with a heavy, lasting perfume in the stern. Thus do the phantom fleets float glimmering towards the open sea, which at length shines with the countless lights of the dead, whilst the air grows fragrant with the smoke of smouldering incense.

Other festivals there are of a more or less religious or semi-religious character; but none so beautiful, pathetic, and strangely impressive as that of Bommatsuri. Curious, indeed, to the Western mind is the moveable feast known as the Setsubun, with its *Oni-yari* or casting out of devils. On the eve of the festival through the streets of the villages and towns one hears the rattle of the Yaku-otoshi's *shakujo* or staff as he goes from house to house crying out, "*Oni wa soto, Oni wa soto! Fuku wa uchi!*" or "Devils out! Good-fortune comes in!" The *shakujo* which he carries, though shorter, is a curiously shaped staff like that which Jizo carries—the god to whom the souls of little children run for comfort when frightened by the demons or Oni. It is Jizo who hides the poor affrighted little souls in the great sleeves of his *kimono*, and comforts them and makes the demons go away. In the Sai-no-Kawara, to



which all children must go after death, the souls of little ones are compelled to erect miniature towers of stones as a penance, and it is these the Oni (demons) take pleasure in destroying. Thus it is that every stone laid upon the knees, or at the feet of an image of Jizo—the pronunciation of which has a strange though purely accidental resemblance to the word Jesu—with a prayer coming from the heart is believed to assist some little child-soul in Saino-Kawara to perform its penance. There are many other forms of the Jizo idea ; and as he is also the patron divinity of pilgrims, there are statues of him by most Japanese roadsides.

The caster-out of devils, whose staff is like that of Jizo, performs his office for a very small fee, and for this reason, perhaps, finds many ready and even willing to employ him. If the devils be not there after all, what matter ? There is little harm done, and the few *sen* or *rin* will have been expended in a good cause. The exercising words are simply some taken from a Buddhist *kyō* or *sutra*, the recital of which is accompanied by the rattling of the staff. Then dried peas are scattered about the house, which act is supposed to be distasteful to devils. These peas are afterwards swept up and carefully kept until the first clap of spring thunder is heard ; when, for some mysterious reason, it is the custom to cook and eat some of them.

It is the custom, too, after the devils have been satisfactorily cast out, to place a small charm above all the entrances of the dwelling to prevent their return. A stick of about nine inches long and a little thinner than a lead pencil, a holly leaf, and the dried head of an *iwashi* (sardine-like fish), comprise the articles used in making these charms. The stick is stuck through the centre of the holly-leaf, and the fish's head secured in a fork made by splitting one end of the stick, the other end of which

is stuck in some joint in the timber work above the door. Not even the Japanese themselves seem to know why the holly-leaf and fish possess such potent powers against the return of the evil spirits; and, indeed, the origins of many of the most curious and interesting Japanese customs have been entirely forgotten even by the people who still profess to believe in them.

Another quaint and interesting observance connected with the Setsubun Festival is the purchase and use of the *hitogata*, which are little figures of men, women and children cut out in white paper. These are sold at Setsubun time in the Shintō temples. One is bought for each member of the family, and upon each *hitogata* the age and sex of the person for whom it is intended is written by the priest. The little figures are then taken home, and each person after receiving his or her *hitogata* lightly rubs it on his or her body while saying a short Shintō prayer. On the following day the *hitogata* are returned to the priest, who, after the recital over them of certain phrases, burns them in a holy fire. By this act the people to whom the *hitogata* belong are expected to escape all illness or accident during the year.

Among the more domestic festivals of Japan, that consecrated more especially to the girls—the Festival of the Dolls—is one of the most interesting and picturesque. The Festival of O Hina, or the “Honourable Little People,” takes place upon the 3rd of March; and on this one day of the year the Japanese girls and their dolls reign supreme throughout the length and breadth of the Mikado’s Empire.

Long before the wonderful day, in the homes of the rich and poor alike where daughters are, preparations have been made. The fireproof doors of the *kura* in every town and village have been thrown open, so that the “honourable little people” who have dwelt in darkness

for a year past, and all the articles of miniature furniture for their use may be unpacked from their cases and set out in the chamber especially prepared for their reception.

All kinds of food are prepared for the festival : special rice, baked with beans and sugar ; cakes, and *shirosakē*, a particular kind of thick, white, and very sweet wine, only drunk by the girls and their friends at this season. All these things the daughters of the household are supposed to prepare and cook ; and then attired in their best *mon-tsuki*, or dress of ceremony, on which is embroidered the crest of the family in the middle of the back and sleeves, they are ready to receive their friends.

Each girl of the family has a pair of *O Hina Sama* placed for her upon the red-covered shelf, on the first Feast of Dolls which comes after her birth. When she goes from her old home as a bride she takes the dolls with her, and the first feast after her marriage she observes with special ceremonies. This she is by custom obliged to keep up until she has a daughter old enough to do so for herself.

In the shops for some time previous to the festival dolls of all kinds are set out tastefully for sale ; sets of them forming a group or family being placed in small or large wooden boxes and sold complete.

In the streets of every town and village throughout the Empire there are also shops which for the time being are devoted to supplying all the various kinds of furniture and household utensils for the dolls' use. Is it necessary to add that they do a thriving trade ? and that outside all such shops are gathered, almost from sunrise to sunset, groups of wide-eyed, charming Japanese children, who, if they cannot afford all of them to buy, yet gain untold pleasure from the mere contemplation of the beautiful dolls and other articles for the festival ?



Shopping becomes universal, and happy groups of parents and children throng the streets all day long purchasing *tansu* (miniature chests of drawers), the trays, bowls, vases, and other articles for the dolls' house. Bridal furniture is distinguished as being the most beautifully made in *black* lacquer; with the fastenings, handles of wardrobe and cupboard doors made of some bright gold-coloured metal.

There are dolls of all prices to suit all pockets, and the vendors of "the honourable little people" use their persuasive tongues and arts of flattery (as do the shopkeepers of other climes) in endeavours to persuade the mothers and fathers of the little girls to purchase something better than they at first contemplated.

Seated on the raised matting-covered floor of the shops the sellers are literally surrounded by boxes of dolls of all kinds. A Mikado and Empress may be purchased for as little as half a *yen*, or may cost five or six *yen* and more. A set of *geisha* dolls, musicians and dancers, can be had from a *yen* to five or six *yen*. Soldier and sailor dolls range in price from ten *sen* to a *yen*. Of course, baby dolls and ordinary folk are to be bought for a few *sen* upwards.

The poorest child must have her O Hina, and the poorest parent must be able to buy. Rich people spend really immense sums upon a complete set. Sometimes as much as four or five hundred *yen* (£40 to £50), and in the houses of the upper classes the Festival of Dolls is truly a wonderful celebration. Not only are there the newcomers amongst the dolls, but the priceless heirlooms which have amused the little girls of the family (and the larger ones too) through many successive generations. But there are even in so large a city as Tōkyō only three or four large manufactories of these special dolls and dolls' furniture. Dolls of the ordinary kind are, of course, made in enormous numbers all the year round, and are procur-





ON SUCH A CANAL AS THIS THE TINY SHIPS (AT BOMMATSURI) ARE  
LAUNCHED AND SENT ON THEIR VOYAGE TO THE SEA.



able at any time in the usual toy-shops. But those for the festival are only sold for about a fortnight previous to its annual celebration.

Many children possess scores of different dolls, which on the day of the festival are set out in the room reserved for them in ingenious groups; which indicate perhaps a simple family party, a party of *geisha* dancing, a representation of the Imperial Court, with all the chief personages from the Mikado and Empress downwards, in miniature, or some scene in Japanese history.

The bride dolls have their trousseaux chests like real brides; only they are of exquisite lacquer instead of imitation leather or wood, as with us. In these are laid the most beautiful tiny silken *kimono*; *obi*, which rival in miniature the richness and colours of the real things; *futon*, under which the dolls can go to bed; and all sorts of elegant toys.

It will be easily gathered that in Japan, on the third day of the third month in each year (if at no other time), there are millions of happy little girls all taking part in this interesting and ancient festival.

The origin of *O Hina Sama* is lost in the mists of antiquity. It is generally supposed, however, to have been introduced into Japan from China; and in ancient times it was known by various other names—*Tokuasetsu* (the Festival of the Peach Blossom), from the time of year at which it is held; *Diu San* (Doubled Three) amongst others.

Its celebration is traceable, for a period of more than fourteen centuries back, to the second year of the reign of the Emperor Bidatsu, 574 A.D. There would appear to be little doubt but that the real origin of this picturesque and popular festival was in the ceremony of exorcism of evil spirits, which anciently took place on the banks of the rivers on the 1st of March in each year, but which were

afterwards performed on the third day of the same month. Later on it was the custom to use dolls or images made of paper, and called *Hina*, as scapegoats in these rites; the evil spirits or bad influences being supposed to pass into these figures, which were then thrown into the river. In the old days of the Shōgunate it was the custom for the *Daimio* to pay a ceremonial visit to the Shōgun, or military ruler of the district or province on this day; and throughout Japan in every household the *Hina Matsuri*, or "Festival of the Honourable Little People," was celebrated.

The boys of Japan are not, however, left without their own festivals. In no country, probably, are the children more considered than in the Empire of the Mikado, which is, indeed, a land of children, flowers, and festivals.

The boys' festival is the Feast of Flags, which takes place on the fifth day of the fifth month (nowadays May 5th), and it is their own especial day. Long before its arrival the shops in the streets and byways of every city and town are gay with all kinds of toys, whilst in the courtyard of every home stands a great bamboo pole, from which on the day of the festival will float an enormous paper carp, its body inflated by the wind which blows down its widely-opened mouth, and with great staring eyes glaring at the beholder as it seems to engage in an endless struggle with the breeze.

In the courtyards of houses where the family is blessed with more than one boy there will be several poles erected.

At *Shobu Matsuri*, the Feast of the Iris or Flag (so named from the flower of the day), the celebration in the home is much the same as regards food and offerings as on the occasion of the *O Hina Matsuri*. There are the same red-covered shelves on which the dolls are then arranged; but in place of the peaceful images of the Emperor and Empress, the five Court musicians, the

*geisha*, and the other dolls, the household furniture and toilet articles, there are effigies of the heroes of Japanese history and folk-lore. On the shelves at the boys' festival will be found such historic figures as Benkei, the giant follower of Yoshitsune; the warrior Empress Jingo, Japan's Boadicea; Yoshitsune, the marvellous swordsman and victorious general; Shoki Sama, the strong man who could conquer demons; Kintaro, the hairy red boy who was born in the wilds of the mountains, and who, when but a baby, fought with bears; and many other heroes, legendary, actual, and mythical. A flag bearing the crest of the hero stands behind each, and before the figures are set out miniature arms and weapons. The *mochi*, which is the chief food offered them, is wrapped in oak leaves, because the oak is the king amongst trees just as the carp is king of the fishes, the emblem of longevity, strength, and endurance.

The celebration of Buddha's birthday, though not a festival founded for boys in particular, has been gradually adopted by them as a great occasion. On this day, the 8th of April, in every Buddhist temple throughout the land, a temporary platform is erected, the roof of which is covered with flowers. Upon the stage is placed a great tub filled with liquorice tea, in which is seated a small image of the infant Buddha. To this tub flock all the small boys of the village or quarter of the town in which the temple is situated, armed with dippers made of bamboo. They spend most of their time during the day in ladling up the liquid, pouring it over the image, and then into small bamboo buckets, so that they may carry it away with them. The liquorice is supposed to possess marvellous curative powers, and the devout, after making offerings of money twisted up in small pieces of white paper, carry away the tiny buckets full of the liquid with them.

It is generally believed by the common people, in the



country districts more particularly, that the liquor is especially good for eye affections and throat complaints; and also that, mixed with ink, the charm written with it will have the property (when placed about the house) of getting rid of vermin.

Except that boys are boys all the world over in their love of "messaging" with water or substitutes for it, it is difficult to see what great attraction this particular feast can possess for them.

There are other festivals, of course—indeed, many; but few can compare for the children of both sexes and all ages with the great *matsuri* of the parish temple, which with its sports, lanterns, dancing, uproarious merriment, processions, carnival-like, emblematic and historical, and legendary cars, on which tumblers, jugglers, and dancing girls perform, may best be compared with one of the larger "Pardons" of Brittany plus a carnival element.

In the evening the streets, lighted with a thousand lanterns, are thronged by children and grown-up folk. These struggle along, now stopping to gaze in at some shop, where a faithful worshipper has erected an exquisite shrine; has constructed a beautiful garden in miniature in a box two feet square; or has arranged a whole *matsuri* procession—dancers, people, weirdly-clad men who march in front, and cars with figures on them—in miniature just about to enter the gates or courtyard of a model temple. In the street, too, is done a wonderful trade in lanterns, sweetmeats, toys, etc., and the sound of *geta* and hum of many voices bargaining floats up to the twinkling stars.

The night is the time for the boys. From many a by-street will suddenly dash a horde of them, each having his head bound up with a piece of blue and white towel-ling; each dressed more or less (often less than Western decorum would think necessary) in a blue and white *haori*; half-a-dozen of them bearing on their shoulders as they

plunge through the crowd, which good-naturedly makes way for them, a miniature "float" or carnival platform, known as a *dashi*, made out of a packing-case or *saké* barrel, decorated with paper flowers, streamers, and lanterns.

Nothing in Japan, for boisterous fun and pure enjoyment for the youngsters, can equal the parish temple *matsuri*. It is an unique occasion, of which the boys in especial make the most.

And when it is all over and the lanterns begin to flicker out one by one, and the stars in the dark blue heavens above seem to shine all the brighter from the gradual decline of competition from earthly lights, it is a very orderly and very tired crowd that makes its way homeward, sometimes chanting, generally chatting over the incidents of the day, to the accompaniment of a musical *klop-klop* of *geta* on the earth of country roads: a sound quite different to the sharper song of the *geta* on the flags of temple courtyard or the cobbles of paved streets.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE LIFE OF THE CITIES, AND SOME TYPES

THOSE who would know something of the more modern and more vital life of Japan must have dwelt in one or other of the largest towns or cities ; for it is there that it is possible to form the truest estimate of the life of the common people and the trend of national affairs. Every great town affords unrivalled opportunities for studying the various phases of existence, which exhibit not only the modern tendencies but also racial characteristics.

The little shops and houses of the trading and lower classes, with their open fronts, allow one to become acquainted with the inner side of the people's life in a way it is not possible in the more secluded and private business houses and homes. By a strange circumstance in former times the occupation of a shopkeeper or even of a merchant was esteemed the lowest in the scale of respectable callings, and in consequence the business of the nation was almost entirely in the hands of people who either lacked intelligence or ambition sufficient to raise them higher in the social scale.

And thus it is that one does not even nowadays find many large businesses in Japan, or a very high standard of business morality amongst the trading classes. Probably largely for this reason English and American firms trading in the Japanese market, and knowing or seeing Japan only from the commercial side, are apt to pronounce the Japanese





A VILLAGE STREET AT FESTIVAL TIME.



as shifty, dishonest, and unreliable in commercial matters, whilst they have found the Chinese possessed of business methods more in keeping with Western ideas.

It is only in quite recent times that members of the *samurai* class, or, indeed, any one capable of success in any higher calling, have been found willing to become merchants, because of the stigma which had for centuries attached to trade. But nowadays there are many of the ablest Japanese connected with commerce, who have begun to recognise that it is one of the most important factors in a nation's wealth and well-being, and that, if honestly conducted, an occupation concerned with buying and selling is as honourable as any other species of employment, and is one of which no one need be ashamed. Of course, in Japan, as in other Eastern countries, there are some great merchants upon whose word Western traders can absolutely rely, and who never fail to fulfil any commercial obligations which they have taken upon them ; but it is useless to pretend that the greater part of the buying and selling is not still in the hands of people in whose scheme of morality commercial integrity has little place, and who will take advantage wherever it is possible to do so. Many of the trading classes of Japan have yet to realise the general efficacy of the ancient maxim, "Honesty is the best policy."

It is only fair to say, however, that in Japan—as in other Eastern countries—trade, which is conducted in a small way and with small capital, is considered by the traders to be more of the character of a game, where one person must of necessity lose and the other gain, than as a fair exchange of goods for money or other goods, by which both the bargaining parties at least obtain what they require. Amongst many of the Japanese, even to-day, it is the old-time or mediæval system of business which is practised and commends itself to their ideas. And commerce with them is a struggle engaged in by buyer and



seller, in which each must take care of himself, and reap all possible advantage at the expense of the other, whose business it is to see that he is not cheated.

This view of commercial life is, however, slowly but surely changing, and even another ten years may do much to purify business methods in Japan, seeing that to compete successfully with other nations she must herself adopt their standards of commercial morality, as she is undoubtedly willing to adopt their business and organisation.

Even in Tōkyō, the city where one meets with the most modernised ideas, one does not see many of the large stores or conglomerate shops such as are to be found in big towns and cities in Europe and America. But in their stead one has the little open-fronted shops, which are often nothing but the front rooms of the houses, where one sits down on the raised floor whilst making one's purchases, conscious that the smiling and amiable proprietor has decided upon the price of the articles in his stock, which one may desire to purchase, according to the style of one's attire and apparent ignorance of values. In some of the very large shops the practice of having the goods marked in "plain figures" has come into fashion, and bargaining becomes unnecessary; and also in the *kwankoba* or bazaars one frequently finds goods of all kinds marked in "plain figures," from which there is not usually any variation.

But notwithstanding the advance that Japan has made in most departments of life, one is forced to the conclusion that the methods of trade are in a very elementary and undeveloped condition, and far behind the other departments of Japanese civilisation.

Most of the women of the upper or more wealthy classes do their shopping at home; for all the shops are willing, on receiving a request to do so, to send up goods on approval. And thus it is that one frequently sees a clerk or an assistant in one of the larger stores toiling along to some cus-

tomers' house with all sorts of goods tied to his back in a huge bundle, frequently rising considerably above his head, and giving him a most grotesque and over-loaded appearance. On his arrival he practically opens a small shop in the home, for setting his huge bundle down on the floor he unties its outer covering or *furushiki*, and takes out roll after roll of silk crepes or cotton goods, which are themselves done up in paper or coarse yellow cotton stuffs, and other articles which he has been instructed to submit. With a patience that is astonishing he waits for the lady customers to engage in lengthy debates regarding the merits or demerits of the goods submitted ; and should none of the articles he has brought prove acceptable, he seems perfectly willing to come again with others, knowing that in the end a sufficient amount will be purchased to remunerate him for his trouble.

Women of the lower and less aristocratic classes are in the habit of going to the shops themselves, and in such business streets as the Hatago-Chō Itchome, Ginza, Takekawa-Chō, Ichi-ban-chi, and the Ni-hom Bashi-dōri, Tōkyō ; and Main Street, Hon-cho-dōri Nichome, and Benten-dōri, Yokohama, are thronged with women young and old, and children, the latter enjoying the sights of the shops, and the former the delights of bargaining quite as much as do their European brothers and sisters.

Shopping, too, like many other things in Japan, occupies a considerable amount of time. No one seems to be in a great hurry except the small boys who, in the bigger shops, rush about all over the place carrying armsful of goods to the different clerks, who sit upon the matted floors, each with his *soroban*, or calculating machine, at his side, or are engaged in rolling up the lengths of silk and cotton goods, or picking up other articles which have been displayed but failed to please the customers. Even the big shops appear to foreign eyes little more than a roofed over

and matted platform, upon which both customer and salesman sit, often merely screened from the street by dark blue cotton hangings, or an awning depending from the low projecting eaves of the roof.

At many of the shops when the customers have taken their seats, either on the edge of this platform, or, if they mean to spend some time over the operation of finding what they require, upon the straw matting of the platform itself, tea appears for the party, and a somewhat over-polite and even obsequious salesman greets them with an elaborate welcome, and waits for them—if it is cold—to warm their hands at the charcoal brazier before proceeding to business. Often, too, customers will smoke before proceeding to the business concerning which they have come. Then as soon as they are ready, the little boys who fetch and carry in the bigger shops are sent off to find the various goods for which the customers ask; and soon the shopper is surrounded by a seemingly endless selection of articles which he or she regards meditatively, or turns over in a leisurely manner whilst still sipping tea, or smoking a few whiffs from the tiny pipes which many Japanese men and women always carry with them. When the customer is suited, there is yet a considerable time to be spent in waiting until the clerk has made elaborate calculations upon his *soroban*, and the transaction has been recorded in his books, and a long bill written out and stamped.

During his stay in one of the large shops such as we have described, the foreign customer is sure to have been startled by loud exclamations and shouts from the whole of the staff of clerks and small boys in attendance. These outbreaks are so sudden, and often so loud, that one is at first alarmed lest a fire or something very terrible should have happened. But one at length learns that the disturbing exclamations mean nothing of the kind, but are merely the way in which the Japanese shopkeeper and his staff







IT IS A VERY ORDERLY CROWD WHICH MAKES ITS WAY  
HOMEWARD FROM THE TEMPLE.

speed the departing purchaser, and that the weird and at first seemingly inarticulate exclamations mean "thanks for a continuance of your custom," which every *employé* in the store feels it his duty to shout whenever a customer leaves. At first one cannot help a feeling of dismay and overwhelming shyness when one becomes the recipient of this noisy demonstration, and European ladies have been known to take flight incontinently, so overpowering are the shouts where a large staff is employed, dropping their parcels as they fled.

Of course, in the smaller shops there is less formality and less trouble for the purchaser, for most of the goods are stored within easy reach, and in many of the tiny business premises, which are little more than stalls, nearly the whole stock-in-trade is piled in front of the shop, or even on the pavement itself.

In most of these often quaint and interesting stores the proprietors live on the premises, and glimpses of the living rooms at the back, frequently opening upon tiny but well-kept gardens, can be seen whilst the customer is making purchases. In the work of the shops of this kind the proprietors are generally assisted by their wives and children, and, where necessary, by one or two apprentices.

The system of holidays is somewhat peculiar in Japan, for there is no day during the year when all the shops close, and each of the workers employed in business houses take an occasional holiday rather than a week, a fortnight, or a month, as is the case with us. And yet the occupiers of the smaller shops, who dwell on the premises, and literally almost live in the streets amidst the dust and noise and bustle of the big towns, still have time in which to enjoy life, have occasional days off, and take an abiding pleasure in the little gardens which are usually found at the back of the premises. On the whole, indeed, they may be said to have more pleasure and work less hard than many



Westerners, who apparently take far more holidays and have far more obvious amusements and pleasures.

One of the first things which strikes a Westerner on becoming acquainted with the life in one of the great Japanese cities or towns is the comparative absence not only of large shops but of manufactories ; and a wonder takes possession of him as to where the beautiful lacquer work and porcelain, which are to be met with almost on every hand, are made, and where the delicate, gay, and charming silk, crepe, and cotton fabrics used for the Japanese costumes are woven.

There are as yet few large factories where such things are turned out wholesale. The most delicate of the vases, the choicest bronzes and lacquer work, the most charming *cloisonné* ware, and the silks and embroideries are often made in the humblest homes, and represent, some of them, the work of one or two artistic-souled labourers working with the most primitive tools.

Owing to the absence of any considerable number of great manufactories, the polluting smoke, which is the bane of large Western cities, is never seen hovering like a heavy pall over those of the Mikado's Empire. And with the absence of these there is a corresponding absence of the terrible, soul-destroying, and unhealthy conditions of factory life, which afflicts the more progressive of Western nations, with its unceasing and nerve-destroying noise of machinery, that bewilders the minds of those who come within its deadening influence until they become scarcely better than machines themselves.

The hardest of all lives in Japan is probably that led by the *jinrikisha* man ; but although he may be compelled to run all day, like a horse, between the shafts of his little vehicle, through the crowded streets of the city or along the dusty or muddy highways, his occupation at least keeps him in the fresh air, and is healthful, and likely to improve his powers of body and quicken his mind.

One of the most satisfactory things about the life of even the very poor in Japanese cities and large towns is the fact that fresh air, sunshine, green and flowering trees, and restful grass is never denied them, and even the beautiful parks and gardens which are found everywhere are thrown open for the enjoyment of the very meanest and poorest. And for these also, on certain days of the month in various sections of the cities, night festivals are held near the temples, where crowds, made up of all classes, amuse themselves in a rational manner and promenade, a happy throng, between the lines of temporary booths, which enterprising shopkeepers erect on such occasions, or hover in warmly expressed admiration near the magnificent displays of young trees, plants, and flowers which have been brought in from the country by the various gardeners and ranged on both sides of the temple avenues. Flowers and plants, in themselves beautiful, seem in the light of the flaming torches and coloured lanterns to show to even greater advantage; and the enterprising gardeners who have brought in their treasures from outlying districts generally reap a golden harvest.

Bargaining is, of course, an absolute necessity, for the flower-sellers are notoriously given to asking very high preliminary prices—sometimes even five or six times the amount they are prepared ultimately to accept. A pot of chrysanthemums, for example, which has taken one's fancy may be priced by the salesman at a *yen* (about 4s. 2d.) to commence with, and may ultimately, after much bargaining, change hands at 20 *sen*, which is a fifth of the price originally asked. And for each purchase the same lengthy bargaining will have to be gone through. But as evening draws on prices get lower and lower, because the distance that the plants have been brought is often great, and the labour of packing up and transporting home again unsold goods is weary work.

The flower-stalls are, however, by no means the only ones of interest at these night festivals. There are tempting displays of cheap toys and trinkets which prove attractive not alone to the children. And others of the booths are devoted to dolls, singing birds in cages, goldfish in globes, fans, sweetmeats, hairpins, roasted beans, plums in sugar, cakes of all kinds, and quaint chirping insects—the singing cricket amongst them—in tiny wicker-cages or baskets, and other articles of all kinds too numerous to enumerate. Then at the end of the long line of stalls are frequently to be found other booths or tents, in which dancing girls and jugglers perform, and freaks and monstrosities, educated animals, etc., may be seen for varying entrance fees, which sometimes do not exceed a farthing.

Most of these shows adopt quite Western methods to attract audiences, and outside them one finds showmen beating drums and shouting highly-coloured descriptions of the wonders to be found inside; whilst marvellous pictures entice passers-by, and even an occasional glimpse of the wonders within is afforded to the gaping crowd by a momentary and tantalising raising of the curtain which covers the entrance.

To the Japanese child, as to its Western brothers and sisters, all these things possess a marvellous attraction, and the little feet which trudge so gallantly on ringing *geta*, or thrust in soft-treading *waraji*, never seem weary until the last booth has been passed and the quiet and shadow-enshrouded streets, lighted only by the swinging paper lanterns of home-coming folk, strikes a strong note of contrast with the noise and brilliant illumination of the festival.

Nearly all the children, even the poorest (for simple toys are so cheap), trudge homeward with their little hands filled with trifles bought at the expenditure of a few *sen*, and their little hearts happy with the sights they have



seen and the pleasures they have enjoyed. And those who have, for some reason or other, remained at home will not have been forgotten by the fortunate ones who have visited the festival. These will be sure to receive some little gift, and the *omiagé*, or present, which must be given in return, is a regular institution.

The whole festival is over quite early, and most people have gone home and retired to rest by ten o'clock at night; and soon after that hour the tiny stalls and booths are stripped of their lightened burdens of toys and sweets and other things as if by magic, and their energetic proprietors take down the framework, pack up their unsold goods and disappear, leaving behind not a trace of the night's festivities, save perhaps a few fragments of paper or broken toys, to greet the rising sun.

The city dwellers of Japan are rather inclined, as they are in other parts of the world, to look down upon the country people for their lack of manners, greater simplicity of dress, and slower intellect; whilst the country people for their part are not less prone to poke fun at the fads and often to them incomprehensible fashions of city folk. But whilst it is true the country folk laugh at those of the town, there is nevertheless in modern Japan just the same tendency for the younger life of the country to constantly migrate to the towns. Tōkyō is the loadstar of attraction for the young Japanese peasant or provincial just as London is for his English equivalent. And thither he migrates from his country home to seek his fortune, frequently, alas! to find in the end nothing but a pitiful existence in front of him, or to adopt the hard life of the *kurumaya* (*jinrikisha* boy) instead of finding the success, wealth and influence of which he had dreamt. Sometimes, of course, skilful workers in lacquer or metal will migrate from the villages or small towns to the large towns or cities, and find not only congenial but eminently profitable em-

ployment. But these are the few, and the problem of the overcrowding of cities promises in the near future to be scarcely less pressing and difficult of solution in Japan than it is with us.

With regard to the lower-class women of the cities, they are in many respects very similar in type to those of the country, except that they enjoy less freedom than do the country women in the selection of their occupations. They meet and chat amongst themselves and with the men around the wells and water-tanks, which stand at frequent intervals in the streets of the larger towns, whilst drawing water, washing rice or their kitchen utensils ; but all the same they have not the opportunity of so many various types of labour as have their country-side sisters.

As a general rule their energies are chiefly expended in indoor occupations and in the more domestic varieties of work ; and the chief bread-winning occupations are left almost entirely in the hands of men and boys. But there are, of course, several trades and occupations, which the necessities of city life have largely brought into existence, eminently suitable for women, and by which they are able to support themselves or their families.

One of the most popular callings for women is that of hairdresser, and a clever woman can always make a handsome living in this way. Indeed, that she, as a general rule, does so has become so accepted a supposition that there is a saying in Japan that " The hairdresser's husband need do nothing." Many women, too, at the head of this profession not only take apprentices, but actually obtain assistants to do the less important types of coiffure and the preparatory work, to which the hairdresser herself does only the finishing touches. How important hairdressing is in Japan may be gathered from the fact that to spend four or five hours over one coiffure is by no means an unusual thing ; and some of the most elaborate erections of



IN YOKOHAMA THERE IS A STRANGE BLENDING OF THE OLD WITH THE NEW.  
BUT THE PICTURESQUE STILL ABOUNDS BY THE WATER SIDE.





hair frequently take longer than even this. That they remain "up" for a week or more must indeed be a satisfaction to the owners who have devoted so much time to their erection.

There are also many women in the towns who take in work for tailors, and who give lessons in sewing. And others follow the profession of instructors in the ceremonial tea etiquette, music, painting, and flower arrangement. Indeed, many women of the older type, to whom more public occupations would prove a trial and distasteful, earn an independence by following one or other of the callings which we have mentioned.

Hotel-keeping, too, is not a little in the hands of women; and, indeed, in the country districts one may say is very largely under their supervision. The attendants are usually prettily-dressed, charming-mannered, and often sweet-faced *musumes*, and the proprietor of the hotel is frequently a woman. Where this is the case she is truly the master of the house; her husband may or may not appear, and if he does it is quite as a subsidiary. There are generally one or two men about, but these will be working under the direction of the woman proprietress. The latter usually makes an excellent head of an hotel, managing everything, from the cooking of the meals in the kitchen to the filling and heating of the great bathtub, into which guests are invited to enter every afternoon in strict order of their rank.

There is a saying in Japan that an unmarried or a widowed male hotel proprietor is unlikely to succeed in his business, and in many of the large towns where restaurants are nowadays springing up, at which food served in the foreign style can be obtained, one finds a man and his wife conducting the business in common and on terms of good fellowship and absolute equality of authority and interest. In the little eating-houses, where one can get a well-cooked

dinner of from four to six courses at a charge of about fifteen-pence, the man is generally the cook, and the woman serves and handles the money until the business is sufficiently prosperous to justify additional assistance. Then the woman may confine herself to the general reception of the guests and the keeping of the accounts, while the actual waiting is delegated to *musumes* or waiters.

The business of keeping a tea-house is also one in which women are largely concerned, both in the town and country districts, and however remote the place, or however rough the road leading to it, at every halting-point one is sure to be found. Sometimes these have more of the character of hotels, with several rooms for the use of guests; at others merely rough shelters, at one end of which the water for the tea is kept boiling over a charcoal brazier, whilst at the other end a few seats covered with mats or a coloured blanket or two serve as resting-places for travellers or *habitués*. But whatever size the place may be, and wherever situated, one is sure to be well waited upon by a woman attendant, and tea will be served promptly and daintily. If one requires more substantial refreshment the resources of the house will be at once ransacked, and whether it be only a slice of water-melon, or eels served with rice, eggs, soup, or vermicelli, or a more elaborate meal, according to the resources of the establishment, it will undoubtedly be the best that at the moment can be provided.

When the feast is over and the guest wishes to depart, the dishes that have been specially ordered are paid for in the usual way, but the tea and the sweetmeats are considered to be offered gratuitously, and no stated charge is made for them; payment being made by a small present, called *chadai*, left for the purpose. Sometimes where the visit has been for several days, or the party is a large one,





A JAPANESE MASSEUR, WHO IS FREQUENTLY BLIND.



*chadai* will amount to several *yen* ; and this gift is supposed to pay also for extra services and attention bestowed not only by the servants but by the proprietor of the inn. The "tip" has to be neatly wrapped up in paper on which is written "*on chadai*," which literally means tea-money, and is given with as much formality as any other gift in Japan. The maid who is to call the landlord is summoned by a clapping of hands, and when the landlord himself arrives, the *chadai* is pushed to him along the matting floor, whilst one makes some self-deprecating remark such as, "It is very little to give you for all the great kindness you have shown us."

Although, of course, the recipient will have been expecting the gift, he will bow low down to the floor with every expression of surprise ; and raising the little package to his head in token of acceptance and gratitude, he will himself make depreciating remarks concerning what he has done for his guests, and relative to the humbleness and inconvenience of his establishment. Then after his formal thanks are ended he will slip away to see how much he has got. But whatever his pleasure or disappointment may be on viewing the *chadai*, nothing but the most smiling gratitude will appear upon his face when he makes a return present of a fan, sweetmeats, or some trifle ; and he will speed the parting guests with his lowest bow and most beneficent smile after having seen to their final wants.

Another not unimportant calling which is followed by both men and women of the towns is that of fortune-teller ; and these guides, who are consulted on all matters of importance in life, are to be found in most quarters of the city, and many of them earn considerable incomes by practice of their profession. The more celebrated fortune-tellers not only profess to be able to tell the most lucky days for marriage, commencing a journey, etc., but also



to assist in the recovery of lost articles of value, and to give reliable information regarding the causes of illnesses.

Most Japanese of the lower and lower-middle class, and perhaps one might say the upper classes too, believe implicitly in the power of the fortune-teller; and when they have been warned against impending ills, or against certain actions, many curious and ingenious expedients are adopted to avoid all risk of the catastrophe which has been foretold. And some of the shifts by which people seek to outwit the powers of evil are very quaint indeed.

One instance of the exercise of these subterfuges may suffice to show of what childlike simplicity they frequently are. On one occasion in Nagasaki, when an important marriage had been arranged between two "high contracting parties," the fortune-teller discovered that the bride lived in a quarter of the city which was bad for the bridegroom's luck; this was, of course, a matter of the gravest importance. The relatives, however, on both sides were most anxious that the marriage should not for this reason be broken off. So it occurred to an ingenious member of the bride's family that the simplest way to hookwink the gods would be for the young lady to reside for a day or two before the wedding in the house of a relative residing in another part of the city, which, of course, was one which was entirely favourable to her future husband's fortune. It is pleasant to think that this transparent ruse must have had the intended effect upon the gods, for not only did no ill-luck befall the young pair, but, on the contrary, "they lived happily ever after," blessed by good fortune and good health.

In the large towns and cities there is no lack of reasonable amusement, and the theatre, though not, even now, regarded with great favour by the upper classes as a refined form of amusement, has in the past done, and

is undoubtedly nowadays doing, much, not only for the entertainment but even the instruction of the lower classes in national history and the customs of other days. And though regular plays were formerly never given in the presence of the Court, or even in that of the Shōgun and his nobles, there was a dramatic entertainment of ancient origin, known as the "No Dance," performed before the Japanese nobility, which is perhaps more like the ancient Greek drama than any still extant in modern life. Every movement of the actors is studied and conventional; their utterances are a poetical recital, and a chorus, seated around them on the stage, gives utterance in the form of chanting to comments upon the various situations much as did the Greek chorus of ancient times.

These performances alone, the most classical and ancient of Japan, are considered of sufficient importance or merit to make it deserving of representation before the Emperor and his nobles.

The Japanese theatre of the common people has much to recommend it, although the plays performed sometimes deal with episodes of a character which are tabooed in Western lands, in that it preserves in many ways the life and costumes of old Japan. As with us prior to the Restoration, men almost universally took women's parts, so are the actors in a Japanese theatre usually men; although there are a few places where, with an inversion of this custom, all the parts are performed by women. In no case are men and women seen performing upon one stage. The Japanese theatrical performance cannot be considered in the light of an after-dinner entertainment; the plays last all day, from ten or eleven in the morning till eight or nine o'clock at night, and some of them run continuously for several days. Lunch, dinner, with innumerable little meals between whiles, are necessary concomitants of a day's entertainment at the theatre;

and tea-houses in the neighbourhood of the bigger theatres not only cater for the audiences, but also provide a room in which to take the various meals between the acts. Light refreshments, such as tea, cakes, and fancy fruits, are served in the boxes of the theatre whilst the play is in progress, and the Japanese audience when enjoying a day at the play smoke and chat and eat quite unconcernedly whilst the comedy or tragedy is being performed.

The professional story-teller or *hanashika* is another institution not dissimilar to the theatre. He gives his recitals in public rooms or halls, where he tells interminable stories night after night with the skill of a practised and well-trained elocutionist; each gesture and every modulation of his voice is as carefully studied as though he were an actor, and his audience sit spellbound listening to his tales, shivering visibly as he recounts some scene of horror, trembling with excitement when he paints for them word-pictures of gallant deeds done and terrible risks run by heroes of the past, and smiling at the comic episodes.

Some of the most charming tales of old Japan are found in the *répertoire* of the better-class *hanashika*, and even some Western stories find a place in it. The serial story is quite popular, and the same audience will frequently be gathered night after night when some exciting romance is being thus retailed piecemeal.

The *hanashika* are divided into several classes; and we fear the *répertoire* of stories of those of the lower class is frequently disfigured by tales the moral tone of which is not above question. But the professional story-teller who has talent and reputation is frequently invited—like a “Society Entertainer” in our own land—to come to private houses to amuse a party of guests.

Many a *hanashika*, in addition to elocutionary gifts, possesses wonderful ability as a ventriloquist, so that he





THE STEPS OF THE TEMPLES OF THE LARGE TOWNS ARE WORN  
BY THE FOOTSTEPS OF MANY GENERATIONS.



can imitate the voices of the different characters appearing in his tales, and thus give a wonderful verisimilitude to the stories.

The more celebrated professional story-tellers have all classes of tales in their *répertoire*, solemn and gay, adventurous and idyllic, dramatic and poetic—all are represented; and he seldom fails to make his listeners weep or laugh according to the character of the story which he is relating.

Amongst the professional entertainers of Japan none have been more written about, or in a general way are perhaps better known to the foreigner, than the *geisha*. And although there are those who contend that the *geisha* has bulked too largely in most books and even romances relating to Japan, the contention is not really a very sound one, for in the past at least they have represented so much that was charming, idyllic, and important in Japanese life that no book upon the country could be considered as complete in the pages of which the footfall, the smile, and the fascination of the *geisha* did not appear.

The *geisha* proper is, of course, a dancing girl. To most of those, indeed, who have only a slight knowledge of Japanese life and customs, she appears to be little more than a public dancing girl who may or may not—generally may not—be also virtuous. But although the *geisha* proper dances for money, it is incorrect to regard her merely as a public dancing girl, for such a thing as public dancing, as we understand the term, is little known in Japan.

In the *geisha ya*, which are establishments usually managed by women, where little girls are taken and indentured by their parents, or sometimes adopted by the proprietors of the establishment, the *geisha* are trained from early youth not only in the art of dancing, but also in singing and *samisen* playing, and the etiquette of serving



and entertaining guests, and, finally, whatever else is held to make a girl charming and attractive to men.

From these *geisha ya*, girls who have finished their training can be hired by the day or for the evening by the proprietors of tea-houses or by private individuals who are giving entertainments to their friends. A great deal of trouble is taken over the education of the *geisha*, and when they have been thoroughly taught they prove a very valuable investment, and well repay the owners of the *geisha ya* for all the expense and trouble which they have lavished upon them.

Hardly any Japanese social entertainment is regarded as complete unless one or more of these girls are in attendance, and how charming an addition their dancing, music, and graceful service of the meal forms at a tea-house party it is not easy to express.

When the Japanese want to entertain their friends, they invite them to a tea-house where they have engaged a private room, leaving their women folk at home, and provide amusement for themselves and their friends through the medium of the *geisha* they have hired from a *geisha ya*, or who belong to the *chaya*. Large sums of money can be spent over such entertainments, for although the dishes of the feast, which usually accompanies the entertainment, are generally unsubstantial, they are frequently, like many other unsubstantial things, costly. And a single *geisha's* fee for the evening may be anything from a *yen* to fifty times that amount, according to her youth, beauty, skill and reputation. At many of the *chaya* which cater for these private entertainments, there are beautiful reception rooms—sometimes located in little detached pavilions—spacious apartments with walls formed of the usual paper-covered sliding-screens (*karakami*), which are so easily moved, and admit into the room by day, in company with the *shoji*, when closed, such an artistic and pearly light.

The Japanese dances performed by the *geisha* are singularly graceful in character and modest in pose. The notorious Chon kino, performed chiefly in the Treaty Ports for the benefit of the foreigner, though sometimes referred to as a *geisha* dance is not in reality one at all, but a game of forfeits of a degrading and demoralising character.

In the real dances of the *geisha*, seen at the better-class tea-houses and at entertainments given by the Japanese to their friends, the graceful and supple swaying of the bodies and limbs of the dancers, the artistic manipulations of the draperies, the variety of the ideas and costumes in the different dances, all serve to make such entertainments some of the pleasantest and most artistic experiences in Japan. Most of the dances have a definite *motif* underlying both the schemes of costumes and the movement of the dancers. For example, sometimes dainty *geisha* clad in scarlet and yellow *kimono* imitate, by supple bending of their bodies and the fluttering of the flowing sleeves of their garments, the dance of Maple Leaves, as they are driven this way and that by the autumn wind; whilst at others, with tucked up *kimono* and their vivid red petticoats showing, they take the characters of little country girls carrying their eggs or their produce to market in a neighbouring village. Or again, attired in full armour of ancient times, they imitate the martial walk and gestures of old-time heroes of Japanese history; and at others, dressed up to represent old men and women, their dance depicts some well-known incident or legend enshrined in Japanese folk-tales.

In all their performances one is conscious of watching and listening to finished artistes, in whose bodies one sees the cult of graceful movement brought to its highest perfection. And when the entertainment is over, and all on-lookers have been bewitched by their grace and beauty, the

*geisha* take upon themselves yet another rôle, and descending from the platform, or coming from the end of the room where their performance has been given, they mingle with their employers, laughing, jesting, gay and apparently happy, until there is little wonder if many fall beneath the spell of their bright eyes and merry wits which have beguiled them through the long evening entertainment. And, indeed, whatever the *geisha* does, whether she dances, waits upon the guests of her employer, or sits cross-legged upon the floor smoking her *kiseru* (little pipe), and smiling and chatting, she is always a delightfully graceful and winsome little person.

Unfortunately, however, charming as the *geisha* are, and perhaps because of the very accentuation of charm which their training is designed to produce, though fair there are many of them frail; and although the *geisha* is not necessarily bad, there are so many elements of temptation to evil in her life, and so little to act as a stimulus to her to do right, that where one continues blameless, many fall and pass beyond the pale of respectability altogether.

Yet so undeniably charming, fascinating, and bright are the *geisha* of Japan, that many have been married by men of good social standing, and now occupy the position of the "honourable lady of the house" in highly-respectable homes. Indeed, though lacking either education or moral training, but versed thoroughly in all the more superficial accomplishments which please—quick repartee, a charming wit, always pretty and well dressed—the *geisha* not infrequently proves a formidable and triumphant rival to the demure and well-brought-up maiden of good family, who can perhaps only bring to her husband an unsullied name, silent obedience, and the faithful service of her life.

To those who know the social side of Japanese life well, the question of the *geisha* and her alliance with men of good family presents an almost parallel problem to that







ONE OF THE FINEST GATES IN JAPAN.

provided by the tendency of music hall artistes and actresses to gravitate to the peerage in our own land. And just as such alliances with us seem to threaten an ultimate decadence of manners, the same may be said of the *geisha* problem in Japan.



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE LIFE OF THE COUNTRY FOLK AND THEIR OCCUPATIONS

THE life led by the Japanese in the country districts is not only full of picturesqueness, but for the Westerner possesses many features of interest. The great Héimin class includes the peasants, artisans, and merchants, which three classes, in point of rank and importance, are strangely different to our own equivalents; the artisans coming below the farmers, and the merchants below the artisans. The whole of the common people fall into this class except, indeed, such as those who were in former times considered altogether outside the pale of respectability, the Hinin and Éta, who were outcasts, living by begging, the caring for dead bodies, the slaughter of animals, the tanning of hides, and other employments that, according to ancient ideas, rendered them unclean.

In former times these outcasts formed a distinct class who were forbidden to intermarry with any holding a higher position in the social scale. But of recent times the laws affecting the Éta and Hinin have been repealed, and nowadays there is no real distinction of any practical value except that existing between the noble and the common people. Nowadays Samurai and Héimin are indistinguishably mixed.

But from very early times the agriculturists have been very sharply divided from the military or *samurai* class.

The latter was first divided from the peasantry in the eighth century, and although here and there a peasant has in the past and does nowadays, by force of his personal character and abilities, rise into the higher ranks, the peculiar circumstances of the *samurai* and agriculturists have tended to produce quite different characteristics in persons having originally a common stock. In the course of the centuries to the military class have come the advantages of education, skill in arms and horsemanship, and the opportunities of rising to places of distinction and power, and of living lives free from persistent care with regard to the provision of the daily food. And this circumstance has in itself assisted to high ideals of duty and loyalty which have over and over again been fruitful of heroic deeds.

On the other hand, the peasants and the farmers, tilling their little rice fields year after year, have had to bear heavy burdens of taxation, and even to pursue a life of hardest toil to ensure a bare subsistence of food for themselves and those dependent upon them. And, in addition to this, they have had to learn to bear all the things imposed upon them by their superiors with little hope of ultimate gain for themselves. It is, therefore, little to be wondered at that, as the centuries have gone by, the wits of the farmers and peasants have been dulled by daily and continuous toil, and that they know little and understand less of the changes which have in the past gradually taken place, and are at the present time rapidly taking place, in their native land. The only thing that really seems to stir or affect them is the failure of the harvest, or the increase in the burden of taxation which they have to bear.

The Héimin class is distinctly conservative, because they are not able to grasp the trend of public affairs, and are apt, therefore, to regard any change as likely to have as its chief effect the making of their already somewhat

hard lot harder. For this same reason they have often in the past, though usually peaceful and amiable, been roused to take part in riots and bloodshed when threatened with any political change which in their eyes seems fraught with the danger of heavier taxation; and on occasion they have rebelled when the harvest has failed, and they themselves and their families were starving, whilst the military and official classes still had more than sufficient for their needs.

The last two decades have, however, done much to improve matters so far as knowledge goes amongst the lower classes. Even the farmers, ignorant and dull of intellect though they frequently are, yet are seldom entirely illiterate, and throughout the country men of this class are not seldom to be found who are well educated and have risen to positions of great responsibility and importance, and are able to think for themselves upon the problems existing and crying for solution in modern Japan. Several of these men, who have risen to such positions as we have indicated, have proved veritable iconoclasts when seeking to deal with existing circumstances of an adverse nature or to solve social problems. What many of them have practically said is very much what has been said in England by some of the leaders of modern Socialism. "What use (has been the cry of their brethren in Japan) is it to issue orders to peasants and people of the lower classes to be frugal, industrious, and law-abiding, when those in power, whose duty it is to show a good example to the people, are themselves guilty of extravagant luxury, and pass their lives in idleness."

A peasant reformer, as long ago as the middle of the last century, attacked all these abuses, and also was clear-sighted enough to point out that Japan could not forever reckon upon immunity from attack, or the non-existence of necessity on her part to attack others, and for this reason



A large, complex arrangement of small, stylized figures, possibly representing a crowd or a specific scene, located at the bottom of the page.

THE JAPANESE DANCES PERFORMED BY THE GEISHA ARE SINGULARLY GRACEFUL.



THE JAPANESE DANCES PERFORMED BY THE GEISHA  
ARE SINGULARLY GRACEFUL.

he proceeded to point out the mischievous nature of a decree which had been issued forbidding the peasantry to exercise themselves in military matters such as fencing, and from the possessing or wearing of swords. And the desire of this far-sighted and advanced reformer of half a century ago is strangely in accord with that of the ablest of Japan's many intellectual sons of the present day.

"What I pray for is," said the petition sent to the Shōgun from the village of Ogushi, "that the country may enjoy peace and tranquillity, that the harvest may be plentiful, and that the people may be happy and prosperous." Adding, "Whether the country is to be safe (from riot and revolution) or not depends whether the administration is carried on with mercy or not."

From this document, which is truly remarkable when one considers that it is sent to the Shōgun by a peasant, who points out what he believes to be a mistake in the policy of the ruler, one easily gathers that the working classes of Japan, though almost crushed by heavy burdens of taxation, which have, of course, been materially increased of late years, yet did not, even when in the grip of the most terrible poverty, entirely lose that independence of thought and action which are, indeed, characteristics of the race. That they have not in the past considered themselves as a servile class, nor their military or other rulers, save only the Mikado, the Son of Heaven, himself, above criticism or reproach has frequently been proved; and on occasion they have not hesitated to claim their rights boldly and to advocate necessary or advisable reforms. It is easy to gather, too, from historic examples, both ancient and modern, that the Japanese peasant is, when called upon to do so, ready to make personal sacrifice, even of life itself, in the interests of his friends or the community of which he is a member.

One pathetic example of this spirit is enshrined in the



story of the headman of a certain village who journeyed to Yedo to present to the Shōgun, on behalf of his fellow villagers, a complaint against the extortions and injustice of his *daimio*. Failing to find any one either willing or able to present this petition to the Shōgun, he at last ventured to stop the latter's palanquin as it passed through the street, and to thrust the paper forcibly into the great man's hand. The mere act of stopping the palanquin was a crime punishable by death. And, notwithstanding the fact that the complaints contained in the petition were proved to be well founded, the headman for his rash act was condemned by his own *daimio* to suffer the horrible death of crucifixion. This, we are told, he did with unflinching courage, having secured for his fellow villagers immunity from further extortions and injustice.

Throughout Japan, and in all classes, can be found examples of the same kind of spirit which animated the hero whose story we have just related. A spirit of even astounding self-sacrifice, which has been fostered not only by the national Shintō faith, but also by the domestic upbringing of the race through many successive generations.

And to-day we find the Japanese peasant, though undoubtedly ignorant and in many instances oppressed, still in full possession of his manhood, and declining to drift into a state of serfdom. He clings tenaciously to his rights in so far as he knows what they are ; and when the question in dispute is one that really appeals either to his mind or his heart, he is ready to hold to it against the whole world if necessary.

Thus it is that the rulers of Japan have in the past always had (and they still have) the peasant class to reckon with should their rule depart from justice or mercy. The influence of this great class is bound to be more and more felt as the new parliamentary institutions themselves acquire





A VILLAGE OF FARMERS NEAR KYOTO.



power, and an increasingly close connection is brought about between the throne and the people. The existence of the Japanese peasantry, with their strong sense of justice and their sturdy independence, has in the past proved a tower of strength against the encroachments of despotic government, and should in the future make for the advancement and solidarity of the great nation to which they belong.

Into this great Héimin class also fall the artisans, who are in fact more deserving the name of artists, and who have largely made the reputation of Japan in Europe and America as one of the countries where art and love of beauty, both in colour and form, has its highest expression. How deeply embedded in the national heart this sense of beauty is can perhaps be best learned from the homes of the poorest artisans, where, however simple the dwelling may be, one finds spotless cleanliness and a display of taste which would shame that of many a so-called "artistic" English housewife. In these dwellings one finds the soft clean mats covering the floor, which never "scream" at one as does many a British drawing-room and dining-room carpet, the dainty tea-service, the pleasant but uninsistent *kakemono* upon the walls, and the vase of perfectly arranged flowers or foliage in the corner, this happily made possible by the fact that even in winter, in the great cities as well as the smaller towns and villages of Japan, flowers are so cheap and so plentiful as to be within the reach of the poorest. And thus in homes which seem to the alien mind completely devoid of the comforts and even necessities of life, one finds the few articles of furnishing, the simple decorations, and the utensils of common use beautiful in shape, colour, and design.

In Japan the money which with us is spent by all classes in a more or less degree, according to their wealth or poverty, on beds, tables, chairs, extravagant dress, and other similar things, is in Japan available for the purchase of

vases, curios, *kakemono*, flowers, painted and lacquered paneling, and for the gratification of the love of the beautiful, which is possessed by peasant and noble alike. To this circumstance may be largely traced the fact that in Japan, although laborious days and poverty are by no means unknown, there still survives in the heart of the Japanese labourer that love of beauty which has been instilled into the race from time immemorial, and which exercises upon him a refining and civilising influence, the power of which it is difficult to circumscribe. Of the Japanese it may be said that with them truly "life is more than meat," for it is beauty as well.

It cannot be claimed that the peasantry and farming classes of Japan, though thrifty and hard working to a degree, are by any means very prosperous. As one passes from the large cities into the country districts, one is conscious of a conspicuous absence of pleasant and adequate homes, and a lack of the comforts and necessities of life which are found in the towns. The rich farmers are very few; and the labourers who work in the rice fields can hardly, though toiling from sunrise to sunset, earn the little which will provide the simplest living for themselves and their families. For one thing, the use of agricultural machinery has made very little advance as yet in Japan, and the rude implements with which most of the people still labour are a distinct handicap.

But notwithstanding the heavy burden of taxes, a life of unceasing toil, frequent floods, and threatening if fortunately not always realised famine, even the poorest peasants are by no means an unhappy or discouraged class; they seem very ready to seek for the silver lining of the cloud, and though toil and anxiety leave their mark upon them, there is an underlying and submissive spirit which serves to carry them over rough places and to inspire them with hope for happier times.



A TYPICAL JAPANESE VILLAGE BY MOONLIGHT.





Occasionally the labourer will be tempted from the fields to the streets of the city, and will take up the work of a *kurumaya*, or coolie. But the town will not rob them of their independence, and whether it provides them with a living or not, they will ask and expect no man to assist them in their necessities out of his charity. Thus it is that one finds few beggars in Japan, although there is much poverty; for strong and weak are sure to find some employment which will provide the little that is required to keep soul and body together, and so long as they possess this they are light-hearted, hopeful, and even happy. This spirit affects all classes alike—from the rich farmer who, by the tillage of many an acre, taking the fat years with the lean, provides a home for himself and his family which compares favourably with the homes of the well-to-do in the cities, down to the poor little seller of toys, or the man around whose tray of sweetmeats the children flock with their *rin* and *sen*;—all are actuated by the spirit of independence, and appear happy and satisfied with their lot.

The country women of Japan play an especially important part in the various bread-winning occupations. In the little village homes, under whose heavily thatched roofs a constant struggle against poverty and famine is being waged, the women enter bravely and play their part in the struggle. In the rice fields the women labour side by side with the men, often standing all day long up to their knees in mud, with their garments tucked almost round their waists, and their lower limbs encased in tight-fitting, blue cotton drawers, planting, transplanting, turning over the evil-odoured mire, and carefully weeding, only, in fact, distinguishable from the men with whom they labour by the broader belt they wear tied in a bow behind.

And in the mountainous regions, too, one finds women undertaking even the heaviest forms of labour; climbing

the hillsides, billhook in hand, to gather the stock of wood for the winter fire; descending at nightfall the rugged bridle-paths with a load of brushwood or tiny logs packed on a frame attached to their shoulders or balanced lightly upon a straw mat on their heads, which would in other countries be considered a donkey's burden.

In the village of Yasé, near Kyōtō, at the base of Hiyei Zan, the historic Buddhist stronghold, the women are noted for their enormous muscular development and stature, which indeed marks them out from the rest of Japanese women, who are of low stature, as clearly as would a community of giantesses be distinguished from the average English woman. One feature of the robust health which these women enjoy, from the outdoor life they lead and the hard work they accomplish, is that as old age creeps on they show little of that shrinking and shrivelling which is characteristic of most other aged peasant women. This race of feminine porters, who work with tucked up *kimonos* clad in blue cotton trousers, are able to carry extraordinary heavy weights, such as travelling trunks, sacks of meal or rice, as easily as another woman would carry her baby.

It is on account of their splendid health and fine physical development that the village of Yasé enjoys the distinction of supplying most of the nurses for the Imperial children and those of the greatest nobles. A Yasé woman is easily detected, and always seems to carry herself with a proud grace which distinguishes her from the ordinary women of the people.

The women of Japan, as we have shown, do a great deal of the heavier kinds of work which usually fall to the lot of men in civilised countries. In many parts the care of the little pack-horses, which do much of the carrying trade in mountainous regions, is entirely or chiefly in the hands of the women, and the horses have as attendants





WINTER IN THE COUNTRY.



little girls who, both from their skilful handling of their animals and their dress, are indistinguishable from their brothers.

In the silkworm districts, where the silk is spun and woven, the women play a most important part. Upon them, indeed, falls all the care of the worms and of the cocoons, in addition to the winding off of the silk and the after weaving of it. And in many thousands of Japanese country homes the passer-by will find every woman and girl during the "harvest" busily engaged in the picturesque occupation of winding off the silk on to primitive wheels. Indeed, it may be safely said that 90 per cent. of the work of the silk industry—the largest and most productive of Japan—is under the control of women, and that but for their care and skill the enormous silk trade might never have existed. It is in the silkworm districts especially that one finds the women almost on an equality with the men; for her labour forms a very important part of the wealth-producing power of the family. She is thus able to make her influence felt, as, of course, is impossible where her work is inferior to that of men.

The same statements which we have made regarding the silk industry are almost equally true and applicable to that of tea, which is also largely in the hands of the women. The plantations at harvest time are crowded with young girls and old women, who, with extraordinary rapidity, pick the green tender leaves, soon to be heated and rolled by the men over the charcoal fires. The tea-pickers form picturesque groups as they work with the long sleeves of their *kimono* fastened back by bands over the shoulders, and blue towels gracefully fastened over their heads to keep off the sun. The occupation is one of the pleasantest open to women in Japan, and is, as we have said, largely undertaken by them.

The women and girls are also widely employed through-



out the country districts of Japan in the various harvesting operations, the winnowing of rice, and even in some places in the thatching of the houses. Indeed, as farmers and as farm labourers women prove useful assistants to their fathers, brothers, and husbands ; and are seen performing all kinds of field labour with the same industry and skill which is shown by the women of the towns in their particular callings.

It is the women of the peasant classes in Japan who enjoy the greatest freedom and independence ; for amongst them throughout the country are found many who, though hard worked and enjoying few comforts, lead lives of industrious, intelligent, and independent labour, which entitles them to the position they have in the family of respect and honour, and equalling that held by women of a similar class in England and America. Their lives are certainly more varied, more full, and more happy than those of the women in the higher ranks of life, for they themselves are bread-winners, who contribute a considerable portion to the family resources, and in consequence are able to command respect.

On the other hand, the Japanese lady at her marriage often lays aside a position, where she has been the pet and the plaything of her family, to become actually, though perhaps not admittedly, the subordinate and servant of her husband and her parents-in-law. And, as the years roll by, upon the faces of many such women are written the irradicable lines which tell how much of happiness she resigned when she left her old home, and how completely she has sacrificed herself to the interests and perhaps even the whims of those about her. The Japanese peasant woman on her marriage generally takes her place side by side with her husband, and finds life full of interest outside the simpler household work ; and thus to her, as the years go by, there comes an added pleasure in life, less dis-



WOMEN OFTEN STAND ALL DAY LONG UP TO THEIR KNEES  
IN MUD . . . PLANTING THE RICE.

2000  
2000



appointment, and often less physical suffering and unhappiness than is experienced by her wealthier and more indolent sisters. In the faces of the peasant women of Japan one can often read signs of a happy contentment, which seems at first singularly at variance with their laborious lot, and of a placid acceptance of the good things or evil things of life as they come to them.

## CHAPTER IX

### UPON GREETINGS, LANGUAGE, AND SOME THINGS WHICH ARE DIFFERENT IN JAPAN

A STUDENT of the "greetings" of various nations must come to the inevitable conclusion that in nine cases out of ten they are of a somewhat colourless or non-committal character. Neither the French—which is chiefly emblematic of polite concern—the English, the American, nor the German are very distinguished in either form or expression. So in Japan the non-committal policy, which induces us to make a bare statement of fact, such as "good-morning" or "good-day," has its counterpart in the salutation with which they greet one in the morning, "*Ohayo*," meaning literally, "It is honourably early." This, of course, may or may not have the added merit of truth. In the afternoon, "*Konnichi wa*," which being interpreted means "To-day," is even less open to question, as is the salutation used later, "*Konban-wa*," meaning "This evening."

But when something more than the merest formality is, or is thought by the polite Japanese to be required, one soon sees in the phrase used what is uppermost in the Japanese mind. This is generally the overwhelming fear lest on some former meeting he or she may have been guilty of some want of courtesy. Thus it is that frequently after the low bow, with which any ceremonial greeting is prefaced, and the polite statement that, "It is

an over-long time since I have hung upon your honourable eyelids" (*Shibarakuo me ni kakarimashita*), which means merely, "It is long since you saw me," invariably one is addressed after a second bow with the expression, "*O shikkei itashimashita*," which is literally, "Pray excuse me for my rudeness when last we met." And this abject apology is made, although it is the most unlikely thing in the world that there was on the last occasion of meeting anything save the most delightful courtesy on the part of one's Japanese friend.

But if in his usual or casual greetings the Japanese puts little save the conventional idea which is exhibited by most nations in these phrases, in his "good-bye" is traceable the very refinement of his philosophy of life. In the softly flowing and liquid "*sayonara*" which speeds the parting guest or friend, one has all the calm acceptance of what life brings, and the fatalistic doctrine of non-resistance. "*Sayonara*" means in reality, "If it be so," and thus when it is whispered at one's departure it conveys the idea that, "If we must part, then there is no other thing to do."

So one learns to know that just as when we have been with them our Japanese friends have made the most of our presence, so will they make the best of our absence, be it long or be it short. One of the commonest of all phrases is "*Shikata ga nai*," which means "There is no way out of it." It is one of those curious Japanese expressions which serve the quadruple purpose of noun, verb, adverb, adjective, and interjection. If one wishes to say, "The weather is terribly wet, or dry, or warm," one does so incorporating the phrase "*shikata ga nai*," which adds to the assertion, "so there is nothing to be done."

This phrase, indeed, seems to sum up the philosophy of most Japanese thought, and any one who wishes to learn



and comprehend the intricacies of the language must learn also to be obedient to the gentle fatalism of the race, for (as he will soon discover) there is no way out of the multitudinous difficulties which beset this particular path of knowledge.

Mark Twain has written a humorous account of the difficulties of the German language. It would have been almost impossible for him to have done this service to the language of Japan. Even a humourist will not spend five-and-twenty years of what we believe Mark Twain himself has characterised as a "mis-spent life" in mastering sufficient of a language to poke fun at it. And yet had he commenced the study of Japanese except when a child, at the end of even a quarter of a century, he might have known only enough of it to be conscious of his own ignorance.

Every one who wishes to learn Japanese and acquire proficiency in it must be prepared to learn two languages: the written and the spoken. The one differs so materially from the other, that if a Japanese is reading a book or newspaper and wishes to do so aloud it will be necessary for him to translate the written words into the colloquial. So difficult is this dual language that many competent authorities say that to acquire anything approaching proficiency after attaining the age of twenty-five or thirty is impossible, and will assuredly tax the brain of the student beyond the endurance of average intellects. It is said to take a Japanese child seven years of incessant study to thoroughly master the absolutely essential parts of the alphabet. And to enable one to read such a newspaper as the *Jehoya Shimbun*, *Jigi Shimpō*, or *Kokumin Shimbun* with any degree of fluency it is necessary to master at least from two thousand and five hundred to three thousand ideographs.

When this has been done the student of Japanese will





AN EXQUISITE VALLEY LEADING INTO THE  
MYSTERIOUS HILLS.



meet with a rude awakening, however, if he allows himself to think that much has been accomplished. He will then find that there are two colloquial or spoken languages, one for use when addressing inferiors, and the other when speaking to people whom he supposes are his equals or superiors in social position. These two tongues, too, differ not only in their vocabularies, but also in their construction.

It will therefore be apparent that when paying a visit it is necessary to be on one's guard lest by using the vocabulary one should reserve for one's host when addressing the servants one confers upon them too much honour; and when in conversation with one's host to take precautions lest one slip into the colloquialisms which should be reserved for the servants. For this reason, if for no other, the most useful sentence the traveller or student of Japanese can acquire as a start towards mastering the languages within a language is the one we have already mentioned as being used so frequently—and generally unnecessarily—by the Japanese themselves: "*O shikkei itashimashita*," "Pray excuse me for my rudeness when last we met." It will generally be a safe card to play. The rudeness, though quite unintentional, will (if Japanese has been attempted) in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred have taken place. And the remark one evolved with much care and fondly imagined was a compliment was in reality a serious insult.

But there is worse to come!

One's labours do not cease with the mastery of the two colloquial languages. There are, alas! degrees of both superiority and inferiority, and to each is assigned a language of its own. The difference which exists between one's own goods and chattels and servants and those of other people, for example, must be always carefully borne in mind when one is speaking of them, and one must choose both one's words and construct one's sentences

accordingly. There is also a fine and bewildering shade of difference in addressing the *employé*, for example, of a large and small shopkeeper respectively.

Verbs are especially liable to distinctions of use and rank. Not only has each verb its common and more polite form; but to make things more complicated for the unsophisticated "foreign devil," those responsible for the vagaries of the Japanese language have arranged that some verbs, expressing exactly the same meaning, are more polite to use than others. If, for example, one sees a thing, the word *miru* will perfectly express the fact as regards one's own seeing. But, on the other hand, if one wishes some one else to see a thing, the polite form of address is *goran nasai*, or "your august glance deign." And further, if one wishes to express the fact that one desires to look at something belonging to some one else, it is necessary, so as to fulfil the code of strict etiquette in such matters, to use yet another verb, and say, "*haiken suru*," which means that one would "adoringly glance" at it.

Instances of the use of several verbs in this way might be easily multiplied, but even when this intricacy has been mastered the would-be proficient in Japanese is by no means at the end of his troubles. He cannot count one, two, three, four, and so on. Not a bit. A most elaborate system has to be mastered. "*Ichi*" is one. But if we wish to say one rifle the numeral is not "*ichi*" any longer, but "*itcho*"; and should we desire to speak of one chair it is no longer either "*ichi*" or "*itcho*" that must be used, but "*ikkiaku*"; whilst one used in connection with the word "man" undergoes another change, and becomes transformed into "*ichinin*," and so on.

Thus it happens that the numerals, which in most languages present, comparatively speaking, few difficulties of acquirement, in Japanese are beset with astounding





the sentence runs, "selfishness wine don't drink." While, if another is intended, "the augustness" is the term employed; and the third personal pronoun is supplied by the phrase, "that honourable side," who is supposed to be sitting in the place of honour in the house.

Carrying this method still further, in referring to one's own possessions it is correct and, indeed, essential, if one would be understood, to depreciate the article. Thus, if one wishes to point out one's residence, to refer to a building as "that miserable house" would at once identify it as one's own; whilst, on the other hand, to speak of "that beautiful house" would equally identify it as belonging to some one else. By this strange complexity of ideas a depreciatory or adulatory word is sufficient to do duty for the personal pronoun.

Following the same system, relative pronouns are equally superfluous. All that is necessary is to transform the entire sentence when beginning with "who" or "which" into an attributive. Thus, "a lady who arrives" becomes "an arrives lady"; "a gentleman who has left," merely "a went gentleman"; and "the gardener who fell into the pond and got wet" is "the fell into the pond and got wet gardener," and so on. This language, with usually only the verb and noun to trouble about, may seem simple enough—until the adventurous foreigner tries it.

But in a measure the worst has yet to come. To speak Japanese it is necessary to think in Japanese. And to do this requires an absolute topsy-turveydom of all one's preconceived notions of what logical thought consists. To translate an ordinary English sentence literally into the equivalent Japanese would make nonsense so appalling, and to the native mind so abstruse, that no possible gleam of meaning would scintillate from the bringing together of the words. It is not merely the fact that the idioms differ, but that the Japanese mind runs in a totally different and





A STRETCH OF SHORE WHICH OFTEN FORMS A BEAUTIFUL  
NATURAL PROMENADE.



usually a reversed train of thought. If one were to tell one's servant to go and inquire about anything he would not in the least comprehend what was said. If, however, one were to say, "Having listened, return," he would understand and do what was said; but, unhappily, it would be exactly the opposite of what was intended. The cart invariably precedes the horse in this method of communication. And, indeed, not only is inversion, but the most complicated system of linguistic involution necessary if one would express one's thoughts in the correct Japanese way. Who, we wonder, would discover in the phrase "*Kiite itadikite goasimasu*," which is "Hearing wishing to put on the head was," the meaning, "I wish you would be so kind as to ask." Or would deem it necessary when inquiring, "What is the lowest price you will take?" (for some article), to say, "As for decisions place, how much until will you own yourself beaten?" Whilst so simple an assertion as, "I have scarcely ever seen any," in its correct Japanese form becomes, "Too much have seen fact isn't"!

It is possible that a careful and prolonged study of these and other similar phrases will result in a mind of acute intelligence ultimately tracing some analogy, but such prolonged investigation and analysis is not at all conducive to fluency in speech.

Another feature of the language which is sure to lead to trouble is its phenomenal indefiniteness. It is quite impossible to make a straightforward statement of fact in it. And the sooner this peculiarity is understood the better for the would-be learner. So simple a remark as, "He surely knows," becomes transmogrified into "The not knowing thing is not." It will be easily seen that the negative plays an important part in all affirmative statements! In fact, it is almost impossible to make an affirmative statement in Japanese. If one desires, for example, to state, "There is scarcely any more" of an article, what one

has to say is, "How much even not is." After much wrestling one may arrive at the conclusion that this inverted and cryptic Japanese equivalent may be fully translated into, "There is not even sufficient left to make it worth while to ask how much there is."

A Japanese mother, wishing to warn her child against eating too many plums, would express herself in the following somewhat involved manner: "A great deal of not eating those plums is good."

But involved as even the shortest and simplest Japanese sentences will, we fear, appear to our readers, there is yet worse to come, from the practice of the Japanese of always attempting to incorporate the whole of any statement, however complex and however numerous in its parts, within the limits of a single sentence whose members are all mutually interdependent. From a Buddhist sermon we take the following extract to show this peculiar feature; by which, owing to the extreme paucity of conjunctions (for which other unsuitable parts of speech have to serve) there occurs an inextricable tangling up of apparently unrelated ideas as well as expressions.

The sermon in question, after explaining that it is impossible to instruct a horse in the ways of filial piety, goes on to say that, on the other hand, "man has the intelligence wherewith to discriminate between good and evil, right and wrong; and he can only be said to be truly man when he practises loyalty towards his masters, filial piety towards his parents; when he is affectionately disposed towards his brethren; when he lives in harmony with his wife; and when he is amiable towards his friends, and acts sincerely in all his social intercourse." Excellent sentiments these, but somewhat obscure when translated into the Japanese mind: "Whereas-man as for, right-wrong good-evil discriminate intelligence being, lord to loyalty exhausting, parents to filial piety exhausting,



THE EXQUISITE ENTRANCE TO NAGASAKI HARBOUR,  
NARROW AND TREE CLAD.



to 7180  
1894.160

brethren as-for, intercourse being good, spouses as-for, being harmonious, friends to being intimate, sincerity taking, having intercourse indeed, firstly truth's man that gets-said."

But there are many even more abstruse meanderings possible in a really "flowery" Buddhist discourse or oratorical effort than the extract we have given.

It is no uncommon thing for sentences to wander with appallingly intricate contortions through two or three pages of closely written MS. ; which, but for the absence of the parts of speech we have named and the inverted thinking of the Japanese mind, might have been expressed in a few brief sentences occupying a tenth of the space.

There are practically neither comparatives nor superlatives in Japanese ; it is therefore impossible to say directly that anything is better than something else. If, for example, one wishes to say, "The cherry-blossom is more beautiful than yesterday," one has to express it: "Than yesterday, to-day the cherry-blossom is beautiful."

The language, however, has at least one advantage in its inherent politeness. Such phrases as "Shut up" are debarred to the schoolboy in Japan. He must say, "To talk no more is good." Slang, indeed, is entirely absent from the scheme of the language, and for it the most extravagant expressions of consideration are substituted. And the same remark applies to oaths, of which not a trace is to be found in the most reliable Japanese dictionary ; and no hint of them can be traced in the conversation of the rudest subject of the Mikado. What may at first appear to the foreigner in the guise of profane words are only evidences of the simplicity of the people who have unwittingly incorporated into their own language certain "swear words" of the alien. The foreign sailors of the Treaty Ports are frequently referred to as "damyuraisu," which is a literal (and somewhat "Japanesey" looking)

combination of the sounds which the natives frequently heard when the foreign sailor was addressed by his officers.

In the same way the perfectly innocent words "come here" have passed into the language, and have become the equivalent of "foreign dog," and not a request to approach; from the simple fact that the Japanese heard foreigners frequently address their dogs in those words, and, of course, they were foreign dogs!

It is by this elliptical construction of both language and thought, from a Western point of view, which makes Japanese the most difficult of tongues for the Occidental to master. It displays itself as a language of hints rather than of completed ideas. It is for this reason almost hopeless for any one, who has not, as it were, entered into the history and spirit of the race as well as given the closest and most prolonged study to the subject, to expect to acquire any great degree of proficiency in Japanese. As a usual thing, to guess at the meaning is the only, and perhaps safest, way.

Even the greetings of the people are incomplete, and form but the merest skeleton of what they actually wish to convey. The most important part of the sentence often remains unspoken: as for the Japanese themselves, the first word is often quite sufficient clue to the whole meaning of what was once an elaborate phrase. It is indeed difficult to arrive at the idea of a phrase or sentence which is only just commenced ere it is abandoned. "*Shibaraku*" has long ago, with many Japanese, taken the place of the salutation, "*Shibaraku o me ni kakarimashita*," meaning "It is a long while since we have had the pleasure of meeting." The abbreviated form meaning merely "Long time," and leaving all the rest to be imagined!

It must be admitted that most languages practise this system of elimination to a certain extent, but the Japanese have reduced it to a science.



It is not unlikely that this incomprehensible element in the Japanese tongue is chiefly what makes it almost impossible for any one, save those who are endowed with unusual powers of penetration and observation, and who by long residence in the country and intimate intercourse with the people themselves, to master it; and is but another phase of the isolation to which Japan in the past has been subjected. Their life amongst themselves has been for centuries so intimate and free from outside intrusion of ideas or customs, that in course of time they have recognised that where there is a type of mental telepathy existing—as undoubtedly is the case with the Japanese—much of the ordinary complications and explicitness of language are unnecessary. Thus it has come about that often the first words of a sentence which has been employed from time out of mind to express a certain specific idea, wish, or assertion, has come to be amply sufficient to convey the whole meaning intended. The remaining words have come to be regarded as superfluous, and have, therefore, been dropped. And so it happens that in Japan the foreigner finds himself more than in any other country left to struggle with a language which has been shorn of all the commonplaces of conversation, save certain extraordinary and apparently irrelevant ejaculations. His task in attempting to master it, as may be gathered from what we have striven to show, will be no light one.

Those who have studied the question more deeply than it is possible for most Europeans to do are convinced that this seemingly elliptic and mysteriously constructed language is part and parcel of the Japanese character, as few other languages are of their users. To understand it, that intimacy of thought and oneness of idea which has characterised the race from time immemorial is an essential factor. And the very complications, which present almost insuperable difficulties to the foreigner, are those which have

served to weld the people together in sympathetic relationship of mind, ideas, and thought. And for the lack of this, for which no mere ability nor linguistic attainments can make up, the alien, whether he be traveller, merchant, or missionary, can seldom, if ever, succeed in mastering the colloquial language of Japan.

But if the colloquial language presents difficulties, what of the written? It may well appal the boldest and most indefatigable of students. If the percentage of illiteracy was always to be reckoned by the difficulty of the language and the writing of it, then Japan should be an easy first amongst the nations of the civilised world; whereas she compares very favourably with Germany, England, or France. Indeed, except amongst the most ignorant, it is unusual to find a man or woman who cannot both read and write to some extent; although the amount of study required to acquire these accomplishments is fully twenty times as much as that demanded of any learner of a Western land. The Japanese schoolboy or girl must devote at least seven years to the mere learning to recognise the characters employed in writing, and even then the subject is by no means mastered. Possibly at the end of that long period of patient study the little student will be able to remember only a tenth of the signs that are in common use. He may now, however, be qualified to read with comparative ease the better-class newspapers and other similar publications, which will employ only some five or six thousand characters, but it is doubtful if any one has ever really learned the fifty thousand which go to the perfect knowledge of the written language of Japan. Certainly no Occidental scholar has yet claimed to have accomplished such a feat, which indeed may be truly termed colossal.

That the Japanese are by no means a nation of illiterates is perhaps a somewhat remarkable circumstance. But there are several things which have had their influence

in producing this result in addition to their high standard of natural intelligence and industry. The first of these factors is undoubtedly heredity.

The Japanese child is born into the world with a memory for the characters which go to the understanding of the written language inherited from generations of ancestors who have had these stored up in and impressed upon their brains, so that a variety of subconscious knowledge of their meaning and appearance is undoubtedly transmitted to their descendants. Unless this is admitted as an explanation it is, indeed, difficult to account for the astonishing quickness with which the young children acquire knowledge of these abstruse and confusing figures. In addition to this inherited memory, the little students are, no doubt, assisted in their studies by the veneration with which they see these characters are regarded, and a perception of their great importance and sacred character in their lives. This idea is, indeed, inculcated in several works used for the instruction of the young, and in that known as "Teachings for the Young," or "Doshiko," which has been in great favour for several centuries, the following passage occurs:—

"If one learns but a single character each day, behold it will amount to three hundred and sixty-five in each year; and each of these is worth a thousand pieces of gold, and each mark may be the saving of many lives."

In this reverence of the written letters or characters the Japanese are, after all, only at one with most other Eastern peoples, the sacredness of the written word being an almost universal tenet of the religious faith of Eastern peoples.

A strange custom exists in regard to this attitude of the Japanese towards writing. It sometimes happens that a Japanese will find himself for the moment at a loss for the spoken word in which to describe something, and will be compelled to trace in the air with his finger what he



means or the particular written character which represents that missing word. When he has done this he will at once, with a sweep of his hand in the air, seek to brush out the invisible mark which he has made. This is done because it is generally recognised that words, even though traced in so intangible a thing as air, are too sacred to be permitted to remain in it. And this act is not one of the ill-educated or superstitious Japanese only. It is an instinctive act of all who have realised the sacredness of the written characters.

Thus it is that the Japanese, born with the conviction of the sacred importance of the signs, a more or less extended mastery of the meanings of which will be to him the key to success in after life, and to which much time must of necessity be devoted, is so frequently enabled (aided by inherited memory of these things and a patient and astonishing industry) to accomplish what at first seems to be the impossible. But he is also assisted in his studies by the work of previous generations, which has strengthened and adapted his brain to such abstruse and intricate characters. For centuries previous to their studies generations of Chinese had been studying the characters which the Japanese were destined ultimately to adopt, training the brain of the Far Eastern race so that it should less hardly acquire knowledge.

Though the more patriotic of Japanese find it difficult to freely acknowledge their indebtedness to China for the written alphabet, there is no reason to believe that Japan was (as some have tried to prove) possessed of a native alphabet of ancient date which was called "The Characters of the Gods" or "Shindai-no-moji." It is impossible, indeed, to imagine that so practical and utilitarian a nation as the Japanese would have abandoned a simple alphabet of their own to adopt the cumbrous, complicated and multitudinous ideographs of the Chinese. It is, therefore, to

the latter that one must look in tracing the development of the far more intricate system which the Japanese of to-day employ.

Just as the Egyptian hieroglyphics are pictorial in character, so were many of the earliest Chinese characters. Indeed, even nowadays, this hieroglyphic feature is a distinct and important characteristic of the latter.

Many of these, it is true, have in modern times assumed more or less conventional forms which tend to disguise their meaning, but a comparison with the more ancient examples of the same characters will usually result in making that meaning clear. For example, the ancient character 日, *nichi*, was originally a circle with a dot in the middle, and meant the sun. Nowadays it is as we have shown it. The circle has become a square, and the dot a line. One of the most simple of all is the character 山, *san*, meaning a mountain. This was undoubtedly at first a rough representation of that natural object, having three peaks, which in the course of years have become simplified into merely three vertical lines. The character 人, *nin*, was anciently a fairly accurate though exceedingly elementary representation of the man, for which it stands. Now it will be seen to consist of merely a trunk and two legs. A very easily understood character is 囚, *shiu*, which it will be observed represents the character man within a square, and means then a prisoner.

We might give many other examples, but sufficient have been mentioned to make clear the fact that the ancient Chinese alphabet, or what was its equivalent, was a system of suggestion of ideas by means of single characters or signs, which, in its later and fuller development, became distinguished for an extraordinarily ingenious and even poetical symbolism. Thus the signs representing fire and water were read as a calamity, and (what would

the suffragette of to-day say?) those for a woman and a house or home, contentment! Two hearts, in the same way, represented friendship; whilst the representation of a sheep (which was the symbol for docileness), in combination with the character representing strength, meant authority and instruction; and with the addition of the sign for water represented the sea, which is thought to feed the clouds as the sheep are fed. The representation of a woman and child symbolised (as might almost be expected) maternity and tenderness. And a heart, with the character standing for the numeral one thousand, philanthropy or generosity. A great student of the subject of hieroglyphical writing has proved, to his own satisfaction at least, that the heart was originally the root of all characters which were intended to represent ideas of a metaphysical nature.

In addition to the characters which fall into the class we have referred to as pictorial, there are numerous others which have been evolved by combining two parts, one of which is to a certain extent pictorial, and the other more purely phonetic. For example, the sign for water (水, *su*) will appear in combination with parts of other signs wherever the *idea* of water is present. It appears in the character for an island, because one supposes the existence of water in connection with that natural object. Also it appears in combination with the sign for a flood, and in that for a beach or stretch of sand for the same reason, and so on with other words and ideas.

When this system of Chinese ideographs was originally introduced into Japan, they were the only system of writing which the Japanese possessed; and as they could not be easily used to represent ideographically the different forms of Japanese words, some of them were applied for the purpose of phonetically writing proper nouns and grammatical terminations. All the Japanese required was a set



of signs to use for words of their own already existing, and in the Chinese ideographs they found an ample amount of material upon which to draw. But so loosely was the material applied that very soon the Japanese were confronted with inextricably confusing "alphabet," or system for writing, which they themselves found not only cumbrous but even ultimately unusable.

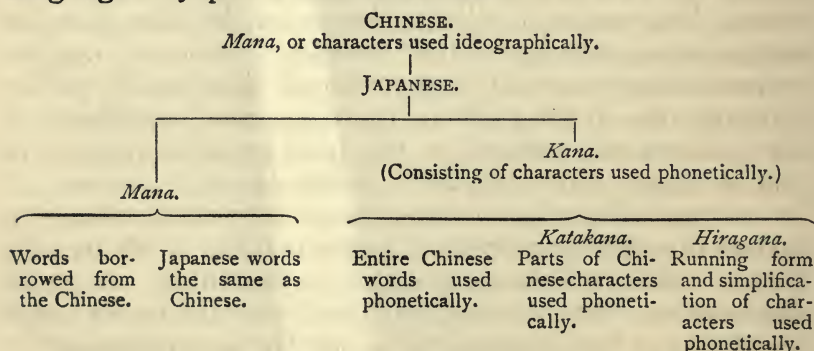
To this difficulty may be traced the evolution of the simplifying process which in the eighth or ninth century produced a distinct Japanese syllabary of forty-seven signs indicating the sounds of the vowels, and of all the combinations of simple consonants with the vowels. These were in a great measure simplifications or detached parts of Chinese characters already in common use phonetically. These were called *kana*, so that they might be distinguished from the Chinese ideographs, which are known as *mana*. This new system had two forms, the one first coming into general use being known as the *hira-kana* or *hiragana*, consisting of the "running" or most rapidly written characters, most often employed phonetically, which in pursuance of the habit of the race, were simplified by the Japanese and reduced to the least possible degree of complication. The other form of the system is known as *kata-kana*, founded upon the principle of merely taking a portion of a character from a cumbrous Chinese whole, and giving to that part the same sound as the whole. A good and easily understood example of this is afforded by the word *ro*, which is a half section only of the Chinese character.

By these means the Japanese may be said to have started on the way to devise a means or system of writing which would be comparatively simple and yet adequate; and would at least permit of their breaking away from the complicated Chinese system they had at first adopted. But notwithstanding the fact that at length they provided themselves with a workable alphabet, which was simplicity itself

when compared to that of China, from the long continued use of the ancient characters they were encumbered from the start.

The use of the old characters, too, has tended to increase rather than to diminish, and thus whilst the new system of *kana* is convenient, and even a necessity for many purposes, it has yet only added to the multitude of signs already in actual use. And, unhappily for the alien student, the old characters cannot be any more given up than from the English language foreign words could be eliminated which through ages of evolution have crept into it. When, too, a new word is needed it is to the inexhaustible mine of the Chinese language that the Japanese go, with a result that every month, nay, nearly every day, may see the introduction of another complicated ideograph or character.

Speaking generally, it may be said that the written language of Japan is derived thus :—



The complicated results, which it may be easily understood were likely to arise from such a system, can be perhaps guessed even from the brief account we have been able to give.

It is not too much to say that to a Chinaman the Japanese language presents difficulties which are not very materially less than those which confront an European.

For although he will find some words and some written signs untransmuted, he will also find many which have a totally different significance, being used for Japanese words, of which he knows nothing; whilst others will have been so transformed by loppings and simplification as to have become mutilated beyond recognition.

But the difficulties of the written language we have mentioned are by no means the whole catalogue; as there may be (and frequently are) many characters for the same sound. And matters are still further complicated by the circumstance that some signs are used for their meaning and others for their sound alone. It is impossible here to enter into a consideration of the many thousands of different characters from which the Japanese alphabet has to be literally extracted. The whole language has become, in process of time, a vast system of punning allusions, which encourages a practice similar to that known with us as a rebus. For example, should we, when wishing to write such a word as "humanity" do so by drawing a man or woman, an eye, and a tie, or perhaps a knot, we should be following the practice of the early Japanese, and traces of the system upon which they worked can be discovered in almost numberless words and characters.

To use a Japanese dictionary one must be familiar with no less than two hundred and fourteen signs, which may be said to serve the same purpose as our initial letters in dictionaries. Then when one has found in one of these some part of the character for which one is about to undertake an exploration, the number of strokes of which this radical part consists has to be counted up to enable one to discover a clue as to its place amongst the two hundred and fourteen in the index. This place will settle the portion or section of the dictionary in which the words under this radical are grouped, and then in these groups one must search for the probable position of the character of which



one is really in search, which is ascertained by counting the number of strokes in it exclusive of the radical or root. For example, if there are only two or three strokes, one at once knows that it will be near the commencement of the index, and its place in the list of two hundred and fourteen characters indicates the part of the dictionary where the words falling under the character are grouped. Then by counting the strokes (apart from the radical) one may find, say, only one. That will indicate that the character is quite at the beginning of the group : and thus one at last is able to look for the word one wants !

But complicated as this process is, the fact that there may be two radicals, so that the student cannot tell at first under what group the word he requires will come, adds still more to one's task. And one may, if an European unversed in anything save very elementary knowledge of Japanese, spend a couple of hours in looking up one word.

But to the Japanese the complications are of a second nature. To them the ideograph is not merely a sign having a meaning (more or less obscure from a Westerner's point of view), it is a vivid picture conveying a distinct idea to his mind. Compared with our prosaic system of letters, it lives and is possible of great beauty and embellishment. Thus the really great writers and penmen of Japan strive to make their characters more beautiful (and also to alien students more confusing) than those of any one else. And in each stroke of the fine pencil-pointed brush with which he writes them there is a world of grace, and the result has the proportion and beauty of line which also distinguishes all other arts of Japan. The artist in the writer makes him strive for the most exquisite proportion throughout the whole length of his stroke, which seems to be one of lightning rapidity. And in the beautiful combinations of strokes, distinguished for their breadth, curve, tapering fineness, and wonderful grace, one finds a fresh expression

of the love of pure and refined art which distinguishes the whole race.

There have been many attempts, both ancient and modern, to solve the Japanese nature as well as master the intricacies of the Japanese alphabet. It can only be said that most have failed more or less completely. Even so distinguished a scholar as Professor Chamberlain confessed, after many years of intimate association with and study of the race, that he gave up the attempt to estimate or describe the character and ideal of the race. Nearly all foreign estimates, indeed, have done less than justice or more than justice to the Japanese, because an alien is at first sight impressed merely by the superficial things (which are undeniably of great charm), and on closer study and acquaintance is brought up against problems upon which only deep and continuous study and intimate intercourse would permit of a correct judgment being formed.

By a strange set of circumstances, and perhaps an equally remarkable system of evolutionary processes, the Japanese character appears as a perfect network of paradoxes and contradictions, and in the end one is usually compelled, after even close study of these, to come to the conclusion that the Japanese are a people concerning whom it is almost safe to say that any opinion expressed would have some basis of fact, and that everything said would be true. Certainly no estimate likely to be made of their character, whether comprised most of praise or of blame, would be entirely out of place in a recital of their moral and mental distinguishing characteristics. To arrive, however, at anything like a just estimate of an Oriental people, in particular it is necessary for the Westerner to approach the study from an Eastern point of view; and few find it possible to fulfil this condition. Topsy-turveydom (as we regard things) is the ineradicable habit of far Eastern races, characterising not only the general mode of life, but

every detail of it, and also of their intellectual and moral being. In the Japanese it is not merely a question of their ways and methods of thought differing from our own and those of other Western people's; it constitutes a total reversal of them.

A whole book might be written on the subject of "Things They do Differently in Japan." Of its great interest, were it ever written, there could be little doubt. Let us give a few of the most common and notable examples, which may, perhaps, serve to make clearer, as nothing else would, the necessity for regarding Oriental habits and character from an Oriental standpoint.

Upon entering a house a Japanese gentleman does not take off his hat; he takes off his shoes. A student does not commence to read a book at the beginning (as we have it) but at the end; and instead of the lines crossing the page they run up and down it. He will, also, read from right to left page, and not the reverse way as we do. The foot-notes are placed at the top, and the greater margin is also there.

The old Japanese clocks had stationary hands and faces which revolved backwards, with the hours marked 7, 6, 5, 4, and so on, reckoning onward from noon.

A Japanese house is built quite differently to an English one. The roof, which is with us the last important part of the outward structure to be completed, is with the Japanese the first thing to be finished. All the tools used by the Japanese carpenters and joiners have a reversed action. He does not push a plane away from him; he draws it towards him. The gimlets are "threaded" in the opposite way to ours; the saws are made so as to cut on the upward pull, and not on the downward thrust. Screws have their threads reversed, and keyholes are made upside down, and keys turn backward. The best rooms are at the back of the house (a fact which may possibly be



accounted for by reason of the greater privacy enjoyed there), not, as is generally the case with us, in the front.

If one desires to write to one's Japanese friends, one takes a small or large roll of paper, not a sheet; begins the letter along the curve of the roll, and the former commences as ours would end, and *vice versa*, and when finished is put into an envelope which opens long ways at the end. In addressing it one puts England, London, Gardens Pembroke 604, Williams John Mr., and places the postage stamp on the back. In the same way a tradesman makes out his bills by setting down the figures first, and then the article to which they relate. And should a schoolboy be learning to write the Roman alphabet he will commence the letters quite naturally in the exact opposite place to what an English boy would do. An O would be begun on the right hand side about half-way down and the stroke brought down, up, round the top, and down again to meet where it had been commenced; instead of the exact opposite as with us, commencing as we do near the top.

A Japanese when going for a ride mounts his horse from the right side, where the harness fastenings are. And the mane of the horse is on the left side; and when the animal is put back into the stable it is done tail first.

Coming to the more social customs, we find that after-dinner speeches are made before the banquet, and thus are brief, because the speaker is as anxious to "get to the real business" of the entertainment as his audience. We have mentioned elsewhere that one does not go to bed in Japan, the bed comes to you; and many Japanese commence washing the feet first when engaged upon their toilet.

If one meets a particularly festive-looking procession wending its way through the streets it is a funeral! and the coffin is not laid on the bier; it is stood upright, in which position it is also buried.

In England women after a certain period are dis-

inclined to announce their correct age. In Japan they take pains to let every one know it by the details of their dress; and young women are always anxious to become old, so that they may enjoy the reverence and privileges of the aged.

Pages might easily be filled in quotation of other examples of bewildering reversal with which every traveller in Japan soon becomes familiar. But those given will suffice to make clear how complex a study the race and its customs must of necessity prove to all save those who are prepared to approach the task with an open mind and a determination rather to seek for the reason of the reversal than to concern themselves with criticism of the fact.

After all has been said, this strange characteristic is less confusing in its completeness than it would be if it were intermittent. It has undoubtedly tintured the life and morals of the race, and the reason for what is incomprehensible in the latter in particular must be sought in the attitude of mind which centuries of reversed ideas cannot have failed to produce. In Japan one finds alongside the most perfect idealism the most revolting realism, more especially in theatrical representations, and this is, after all, but an outward indication of the strange blending of qualities which has made the modern Japanese, who, whilst to superficial seeming the most pliant and easily influenced of people, is an individual capable of the most unyielding persistence should occasion for that quality arise. He is to-day full of tenderness and mercy; whilst none can be more terribly and immoveably revengeful.

Thus it is by a combination of totally contradictory characteristics and qualities, each extreme being perpetuated to its fullest extent, instead of, as might have been expected, blending with and modifying the other, that Modern Japan, which has so perplexed and astonished Western nations, has been evolved. And whilst the

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A GARDEN IN WHICH EACH FLOWER IS CAREFULLY  
AND LOVINGLY TENDED.

people and their outward characteristics present such picturesque, interesting, and even theatrical a series of impressions on the average Western mind, so that one was formerly almost compelled to regard them as mere posers and actors and actresses, with the world as their stage, merely playing at life and dallying with its most serious and complicated problems, and procrastinating and putting off till *myonichi* (to-morrow), they were all the time capable of the marvellous deeds and rapidity of action that have recently gone to place them in the front rank of civilised peoples.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCERNING JAPANESE GARDENS OLD AND NEW, FLOWERS, AND SOME INHABITANTS

THE Japanese garden is different to any other in the world. It is beautiful, but it is not that alone which makes it unique ; it is quaint, but that quality again cannot in itself be held accountable for its wonderful and mysterious charm. To both the beauty and quaintness there seems added a spirit of unusual artistry, which, though not easily analysed yet can be recognised as existing, and being in a large measure responsible for the sense of completeness which strikes the observer.

The best and the most beautiful gardens in Japan are not necessarily the most famous or the most seen. On the outskirts of Kyōtō ; on the Nagasaki hillsides ; in the lesser-known suburbs of Tōkyō there are many gardens which for real beauty must be held to rank higher than some of the most noted "show" places in these cities. Behind the high walls, coped with weather-stained tiles, of many a *yashiki*, or residence of a *daimio* or *samurai*, lie gardens of delight, hidden alike from the prying eyes of tourist, wayfarer, and even neighbour. And beyond the courtyard of many a house of lesser rank, which except for a few flowers and trees is bare, are hidden gardens, round the angle of a bamboo fence or of the house itself, of matchless beauty, all unsuspected by the world at large.



Sometimes the Japanese garden is divided by screens made of woven rushes on a bamboo framework, which are not to be regarded in the light of walls, but merely as dividing-lines marking out the boundaries where one style of garden commences and another ends. The wide openings one finds in these, which are without gates, are designed to permit of vistas of the beauties beyond.

The art of a Japanese garden is in just the same strong contrast to the want of art in an English garden of the average type that is presented by the Japanese system of flower arrangement when compared with European methods. In it there is no mass of bedding plants flaming at one in vivid discords of colour; no suggestion of overcrowding; no flaunting of wealth. The same minute thought that distinguishes Japanese flower arrangement is apparent in the laying out and construction of the garden, which, indeed, is not a flower-garden as we Westerners understand the term at all. In most cases, indeed, it contains nothing of the nature of a flower-bed. In some there is not a flower or sprig of green to be seen: the garden materials consist merely of carefully-chosen stones, rocks, and sand. In which case the idea is sometimes to create a landscape impression of an approach to the seashore over sand-dunes; a representation of the margin of the Inland Sea; or a miniature picture of some cove or shrine, well known or otherwise, along the coast. The illusion which is so skilfully created is generally beautiful, and always interesting.

The Japanese garden in nine cases out of ten is a landscape one, but in no case does the matter of the space at the disposal of the gardener decide the question of its character. There are Japanese gardens covering many acres of ground (although they are rather the exception than the rule); there are others covering a space of about

as many yards: in each case to the Japanese mind landscape gardening is possible. With us this style of gardening calls up a vision of a widely stretching space; to the Japanese it merely infers a landscape accurately to scale, with every possibility of effect taken advantage of in producing the perfect illusion aimed at and accomplished.

The most curious garden of all—the most minutely perfect—is the *toko-niwa* or *koniwa*, beloved of those whose houses are so situated in large towns that there is no space for a garden plot at all. Often this is arranged in a bowl or vessel no larger than a pie-dish of moderate size, and is sometimes placed in the *tokonoma* or raised recess in the homes of the poor. In the *toko-niwa*, which is generally held in a curious-shaped bowl or a shallow carved box, are formed ponds as large as a postage-stamp, rivulets as wide as a lucifer match, minute hills with equally microscopic houses upon them, whilst quaint and tiny plants do duty for “forest giants,” and stones for rocks. There will often, too, be a tiny shrine or *torii* as well to mark some beauty spot in this wonderful, minute representation of a Japanese landscape of which no salient feature has been omitted.

One can only marvel at the ingenuity and the skill with which a park has been constructed in an area not exceeding that of a normal-sized pocket-handkerchief; and at the wonderful illusion that the Japanese artist has contrived to create.

One essential thing that must be remembered in regard to Japanese gardens is that, to enable one to fully comprehend or even appreciate them, it is necessary to understand the beauty and picturesqueness of the stones which enter so largely into their scheme. Not the artificially “worked” stones or “clinkers” of the English garden, but the marvellously shaped ones on which only Nature and the weather have laid their transforming touches.

It is not until one has learned to feel the pictorial possibilities of stones, even to admit that they have a character of their own, and possess values and tones of colour which entitle them to consideration and to placing with a due regard to these characteristics, that one can hope to thoroughly enjoy or understand the beauty of a Japanese garden. The Western mind takes long to learn this lesson, unless in individual cases the underlying artistic sense lurks, more or less unsuspected, until it is called into vigorous life upon the contemplation of these things. The spirit of the Japanese race permits them to comprehend Nature infinitely more subtly than do most Europeans. To learn the inner meaning of stones as it is known by the Japanese themselves is a task of some magnitude, we admit; but it is one well worth accomplishing, for they meet one on every hand in the Mikado's empire. In the street one is confronted by the problems which they present. Stones appear by the roadside, at the entrances to temples, in the approaches to sacred groves, in the parks and pleasure-grounds, and in the last resting-places of the "honourable dead." In all these spots one sees large slabs of natural stone, in many instances obviously water-worn from long lying in some river-bed, on which are cut ideographs. These unhewn rocks are votive tablets, monuments, or tombstones, as the case may be, and are, from the care with which they have been selected, and the regard which has been paid to their natural beauties, often far more costly than the average conventional hewn-stone memorials of our own land.

The use of natural stones is everywhere followed by the Japanese when possible. In many a village, homestead, and in the neighbourhood of many a shrine one will find *chodzu-bachi* (water-basins), or fountains formed of huge blocks of granite or other hard stone in which falling water during the centuries has cut a basin-like cavity. After a



time one learns to see how much more beautiful and artistic are these natural wells, or fountains, than anything the trim mind of man alone could have devised. Soon one learns insensibly to look for beautiful or curious stones as a feature of a landscape or an addition to a lovely spot as one would look for a clump of trees or a fine bed of flowers.

Like most volcanic lands, Japan is a country of marvellous stone shapes, which are often suggestive of human beings, temples, animals, and other natural phenomena. It is doubtless from this fact that these appear from time immemorial to have appealed to the imagination and ingenuity of the race.

To the mind of a Western gardener stones usually appear in the light of something to be eliminated rather than as things to be used for their possible or inherent beauty. To the Japanese gardener's mind they are the framework upon which he constructs the scheme of the garden. Some of these, on account of their curious or beautiful shape, may be worth many pounds. Fifty pounds is no out-of-the-way price for a large stone which either has extraordinary beauty of colouring or outline, or for some other reason would fill an important niche in the garden plan. Every stone in one of the beautiful old gardens which are to be met with in every town has been chosen by its designer and maker on account of its individual expressiveness of form, or suitability for the main object in view. And each large stone in the same garden has its own separate name by which it is known, and which indicates its decorative use or position.

Unlike the attempts of Western garden designers, the Japanese never set out to construct or convey the impression of a purely ideal landscape or scene. The end in view is to faithfully copy (very often to accurate scale) a real landscape with all its natural and artificial beauties, and to



A SECLUDED GARDEN BY A RIVER BANK.

TO THE  
LIBRARY OF THE  
CONGRESS



convey by this of necessity usually miniature reproduction the effect and sentiment which the real thing was calculated to impress upon one's mind. The result of their labours is therefore in a sense, and for this reason, rather a picture than a mere garden, as we understand the term, and also not infrequently to the comprehending mind a "poem in rocks and stones." At least this latter is true of the magnificent creations of those wonderful gardeners of ancient times, the Buddhist monks, who not only introduced into Japan the art of gardening, but were able to create by their genius in the gardens of old the impressions of joy, grimness, grandeur, beauty, of strength or of peaceful charm, just as they willed. They had the theory, at all events, that it was possible to teach moral lessons by means of their designs for gardens, and to even portray such abstract ideas as Chastity, Piety, Hope, Content, Unity, by the same means.

Thus it was that the ancient gardens of Japan were designed to express the character or leading thoughts of their owners, whether priests, poets, warriors, philosophers, or artists, and in them was often the dual idea of presenting both one of Nature's moods and a conception of some phase or mood of man. Alas! nowadays, although the gardens of modern Japan are many of them quaint and beautiful in a way that few other gardens are, the highest art of garden designing is becoming rare and yet more rare under the modernising and more material influences of the West and an alien civilisation.

One of the most beautiful of the gardens, the designers and makers of which have long ago passed into that shadowland from which their beloved ghosts are yet permitted once a year at Bommatsuri to return, is rich with water-basins in which goldfish swim lazily and mouth hungrily for flies; stone lamps, green and grey with age and moss and weather. In it, too, are numbers of miniature hills, up which no beings more substantial than tiny

woodland pixies could climb, crowned with ancient trees whose size give no idea of their age; long green slopes, interspersed with flowering shrubs and rounded boss-like knolls, which are surrounded by sweeps and spaces of sand of the palest yellow tint, silky smooth, and wandering like the convolutions of a tortuous stream. These sand spaces are not paths, nor must they be trodden underfoot. A footprint, a mere speck of foreign matter, would spoil them in the eyes of the gardener who tends them so lovingly, and wipes out every crease as a woman would the wrinkles on her brow. Here and there upon their yellow surface appear flat slabs of stone, placed at varying distances apart, and looking like the stepping-stones across a rivulet. By this simple means, which is obvious to a degree, the effect is produced of the banks of a silently flowing stream in some slumberland.

Such a garden is generally (it should always be) retired from the glimpse of street or hum of outer life, behind high fences, and surrounded on the garden sides by trees and shrubs grown sufficiently, and artfully grouped, so as to shut out even the sight of any contiguous dwellings. In such a garden as we have in mind there is an ambient sunshine, a delicate shadow-play of leaves and foliage upon the green-sward and the sanded spaces, and a faint, distilled scent of flowers borne on the wings of the warm summer air. The cicada sings at noon, the frogs gurgle at night. All day long the dragon-flies play over the surface of the tiny ponds and rocky water-basins; and when the sky has gone from pale blue to lemon colour, and then again to blue, only darker, and is spangled here and there with silvery points of light, there will be fire-flies glinting fitfully. And then comes night, making the rocks and bushes and trees take on fantastic shapes, and the yellow patches of sand look like wounds in the surface of a blue-grey earth.

There is much folk-lore, superstition, and romance locked up in the trees which figure in the gardens of Japan. One of the most curious beliefs in connection with a plant is that relating to the *nanten*, which is found in most gardens. It is that if one has an unfortunate or evil dream (say dreams of gaining money, or a fresh-water fish, or, if a man, that one's nose is bleeding—all of which are unfortunate subjects), and one whispers the dream over the *nanten* very early in the morning, it will not come true.

To the *Yuzuri-ha* (*Daphniphyllum macropodum*), too, is attached the belief that it is a tree which brings good luck. The old leaves of this tree never fall before new ones come to take their place. They form behind the old leaves in a curious fashion, and this circumstance has caused the *Yuzuri-ha* to be considered symbolical of hope that the head of the house will not pass away until the time has come when his son is well able to take his place.

The pine, which plays so important a part in Japanese landscape gardening, is symbolical of unwavering purpose and of vigorous old age; whilst its needle-like foliage is supposed to have the power of driving away evil spirits. Indeed, all the trees and shrubs in a Japanese garden have their particular names and legends; and, in addition, special landscape names according to the purpose they serve in the community of the garden.

We have spoken of the rocks as forming the skeleton of the garden's design; so pines may be said to form the framework of the foliage scheme. Few English gardeners would admit the possibility of satisfactorily trimming and training the pine-tree into a thing of beauty. But the Japanese gardener succeeds in making them marvellous examples of picturesqueness by long and untiring labour and careful trimming; his object all along being to develop to the highest possible state of perfection their natural characteristics of ruggedness of outline, and mass-



ing of their dark green foliage. Some trees are, of course, trained and trimmed into fantastic shapes ; but the great majority of pines in Japanese gardens are merely cultivated and clipped in the way we have indicated, and with the object we have referred to.

In wondrous contrast to the pines are the *sakuranoki*, or Japanese cherry-trees, whose flowers, in delicacy of colour and form, are more exquisite than anything European gardens can show. There are many varieties ; some are pink flowered, some others have the exquisite tints of nacre, and yet others are of snow-white purity. The most lovely of them all, perhaps, are those which bear countless blossoms of a pink so delicate, it is merely white, blushing. In spring-time it is as though the most ethereal masses of fleecy cloud, touched with an ambient sunset glow, had floated earthward to hang amid the branches of the trees. Each grey-green sprig has its wealth of beautiful flowers ; each ancient limb of the tree seems to bend beneath a burden of glorious colour, whose beauties cannot be adequately described. There are no green leaves to break up the mass and compete with it in interest ; they arrive later. There is nothing visible but blossoms, and the branches delicately swathed, as it were, in a pink-white vapour ; and underneath the boughs lies the cherry-blossom carpet like pale pink snow. In the slightest stir of air the nacre-tinted petals fall, a delicately perfumed shower, till the earth is inches deep in the loveliest of coverings.

But not all cherry-trees in Japan blossom before their foliage appears. The wild mountain-cherry comes into leaf first. But whether cultivated (as are the trees of the gardens and parks) or wild, like those of the mountain-side and woods, the cherry-tree to the Japanese is an emblem. Beautiful though they are, it is not alone for their exquisite charm that they are loved and cultivated, and were planted in the old gardens of the *katchū-yashiki*. The flawless and spot-



THE  
GARDEN  
OF  
THE  
GODS  
AND  
MEN



"IN THE PONDS . . . GLOW WITH MANY SHADES OF PINK TO BLUE-  
PURPLE, BLUE TO GREY, AND MAUVE TO PUREST WHITE,  
THE MESSENGERS BETWEEN THE GODS AND MEN."



less flowers they bear are regarded as being symbolical of that delicate refinement of sentiment and blamelessness of life which have always distinguished courtliness and true knighthood. There is an old Japanese saying, "Just as the cherry-blossom is the purest and most lovely of flowers, so should the warrior be the best and noblest amongst men."

Scarcely less beautiful, and coming a full month earlier, is the plum blossom; red, pink and white, and pure silver-white flowers. Loved almost as much as those of the cherry-trees, because they are harbingers of spring. As is the case of the cherry-blossom, the flowering of the *umeno-ki* (plum-trees) is made the occasion for a public festival and holiday. And in January (or a little later, according to the mildness or severity of the season) Tōkyō crowds throng the Tō-kai-dō, bound in happy groups for Mme-yashiki (the plum gardens) at Kamata to view the plum blossoming, and visit the Mme-yashiki at Kameido to see the famous "sleeping dragon plums."

But the charm of a Japanese garden is not merely in its cherry and plum blossoms, though these are so much more written of than the less well-known flowers, which do so much month by month to keep the interest of the garden and gardener ever fresh. Along many an *engawa* hang fruit-like bunches of wistaria bloom, the pale lilac of which contrasts with the brown and weathered woodwork of the eaves and beams. The peony, iris, "morning glory," also play their part in the exquisite adornment of the gardens, both public and private.

In peony time districts such as Izumo and the tiny island of Daikonshima, where it especially flourishes, are ablaze with flame-coloured blossoms. To enjoy the beautiful spectacle the people take a holiday and the schools release their scholars that they may go and view the peony, as they do also the cherry-blossom and plum in their season.

The Japanese are very fond of comparing the beauty, virtue, or other characteristics of women to plants and trees. A strange fact, however, in connection with this, that they compare the virtue and sweetness of them always to the rival of the cherry-blossom (the plum) and never to the cherry-blossom itself. On the other hand, *physical* beauty in woman is compared to the cherry and not to the plum.

Other characteristics are compared with other flowers and trees, for example, for youthful charm a maiden is likened to a blossoming cherry-tree; for sweetness of disposition to the plum-tree in flower; for grace of figure or carriage to a slender willow. As with us, the Japanese have a phrase "willow waist" (*yanagi-goshi*), which indicates a slight and elegant figure. The ancient poets of Japan were never weary of comparing beautiful women to beautiful natural objects such as trees and flowers, and in many poems her poses and movements have been so compared. Girls' names, more especially in the country districts, are frequently those of flowers and trees prefixed by the honorific O. O-Matsu, the Honourable Miss Pine; O-Umé, the Honourable Miss Plum; O-Iné, the Honourable Miss Ear of Young Rice; O-Hana, the Honourable Miss Blossom; O-Botan, the Honourable Miss Tree Peony; O-Kiku, the Honourable Miss Chrysanthemum; or O-Take, the Honourable Miss Bamboo, being amongst the most common. But whilst speaking of flower and tree names it should be added that the more showy ones are not given to the girls of the upper classes, but are largely confined to dancing-girls, tea-house attendants, and the daughters of the poor respectable classes, but even the latter nowadays avoid the names which have become more or less associated with *geisha*, or *jorō*.

By many competent authorities it is held that the names of trees and flowers given to women were not in the first

instance bestowed upon them because of the beauty of the trees or flowers, but because they represented some symbol in the popular mind such as longevity, happiness, fruitfulness, uprightness, or good luck. Whether this is the case or not, nowadays at all events tree and flower names are frequently given to girls more especially because the tree or flower is beautiful, or because the recipient of the name in some way represents by her disposition or figure some characteristic of the object after which she is named.

Other flowers which are the glory of a Japanese garden are the wonderful irises, which come to make the landscape gay in June, and the exquisite *kiku*, or chrysanthemum, upon the cultivation of which so much tender care is lavished, seen in all its glory of many lovely tints in November.

In most Japanese gardens of any size where there is water in sufficient quantity, *hana shobu*, flag-like blossoms of delicate mauve, deep purple, yellow, and mauve and white are grown. The iris (God's Messenger, as the old Greek legend has it) comes in the first heat of summer, just as the rice fields throughout the land have become pools of delicate green vibrating with every breeze and having the appearance of rippling, jade-coloured water. To the iris gardens outside the large cities, where for from two to three *sen* (about a halfpenny) one may view the exquisite spear-like blooms, journey crowds on foot or in *jinrikishas*.

In the famous iris gardens outside Tōkyō and other large towns on the flower's festival days one finds a typical Japanese crowd, but, on account of the distance and the high entrance fee, a somewhat more select one than that which views the cherry-blossom in Uyeno Park and Mukojima, where literally all the world and his wife gather. On the raised and hard-beaten earthen causeways which run between the iris beds one hears the constant thud of *geta*, as the orderly but enthusiastic crowd passes



along on their way to the numberless little matting-roofed pavilions, in which the "honourable tea" and equally "honourable cakes" will be shortly served by dainty little *musume*, in delicate-hued *kimono*, probably sprayed with irises to match their environment of the Hana Shobu ponds.

On these occasions of the viewing of the iris one meets family parties of Japanese shopkeepers, with the quaintest and most engaging children; babies with shaved polls, the schoolgirls with elementary coiffures with flat fronts, and the grown-up daughters with the most wonderful creations of the professional hairdressers' skill, stuck thick with jade and bronze-headed pins almost stout enough to serve as daggers. At these times the alien mind is at once struck with the strangeness of children, young men and maidens, and old folk, one and all being content to sit and drink tea, and contentedly gaze at—flowers. Their idea of enjoyment is so totally opposed to that of Western holiday folk in a like station of life. They do not want, no not even the little ones, to be for ever on the move; for ever doing something as though not a moment of the day should be wasted in real quiet enjoyment.

There is little noise save the occasional ring of the tiny tea-bowls on the lacquer trays; the hum of subdued conversation, which is mostly about the flowers, the beauty of the scene, and the joy that the delicately tinted blossoms bring; or the muffled thud of the little *musumes'* *geta* on the paths as they move to and fro between the tiny pavilions and the *chaya*.

In the ponds, which are almost like tiny rivers, glow with many shades of pink to blue-purple, blue to grey, and mauve to purest white, the messengers between the gods and men. The exquisite picture in these suburban gardens seems to fade away into the distance where the tender green of the rice fields lies a restful carpet under the

intense blue of the summer sky. It is not difficult to comprehend in the waving spikes of delicate iris blooms the lesson of beauty and peacefulness which they teach. A message which it needs no seer to perceive is sinking into the receptive hearts of even the common folk, who have journeyed from their daily environment of narrow streets and business cares to view the iris gardens and learn anew one of Nature's lessons.

And so the gods' messengers, the irises, find a place in the gardens of Japan to-day as they did of old, brightening with their presence spots that without them might be little more than marshy wastes, if such a thing, indeed, were to be permitted in a Japanese garden.

The lovely fragile O-Kiku (honourable chrysanthemum), which come to brighten the garden, and shed their loveliness of form and colour on all around at the same time that the hillsides and woods are ablaze with maples in their wealth of gorgeous colouring, has many shades and varieties. One corner of many a private garden is devoted entirely to the cultivation of the national flower of Japan, where they stand sheltered from the heavy, driving rain and hot sun by frames of light wood covered by "lights" of tough white paper, something like *shoji*, and supported by bamboo posts.

In general cultivation the plants are treated in much the same way as with us, but just before flowering are taken from their pots and planted out in bold masses of colour in the beds already prepared for them. As with us, too, some plants are reduced to a single strong stem, upon which only one bloom is allowed with the object of obtaining a giant flower. These plants are stiffly decorative, and are usually arranged in lines, with the stems tied closely to a horizontal bamboo support lest the heavy head should snap off. Probably, even in Japan, none of these giant blossoms, whose "toilet," when of the in-curved variety, is

almost as elaborate as that of a royal infant, excel in size, shape, or colouring the best that English gardeners can produce for show purposes. But it is in the training and production of the extraordinary plants, frequently bearing on a single plant as many as four hundred blooms all in perfect condition on one day, that Japanese gardeners excel. These, most people are agreed, form veritable triumphs of horticulture which no English gardeners can successfully outrival or even quite equal.

Sometimes, as in the Danzogaka quarter of Tōkyō, one finds a whole street devoted to the cultivation of the O-Kiku, the gardens being fenced off, and admission being charged as at the iris gardens. In the street we have mentioned in Tōkyō the chrysanthemum has been trained so that it forms figures of historical note, others from the Buddhist pantheon, and yet others from dramas. The method of flori-torture (as we feel inclined to name it) which produces this astonishing result is to construct hollow wicker or bamboo framework figures with heads, hands, and feet of painted wood to give greater realism, and inside these figures are placed the chrysanthemum plants, the stems and leaves of which are trained to come through the interstices of the framework. Thus the figures by careful cultivation are literally clothed in garments of blossoms and leaves; and the addition of swords, spears, and other weapons to the military representations give a considerable amount of life-likeness. The foliage in many cases is so trained that it actually takes on the shape and folds of the garments which would be suitable to the character of the different figures. Although these *tours de force* are wonderful examples of the patient skill of the Japanese gardener, it must be admitted that there is an element of incongruousness about the productions that prevent them appealing to the most artistic sense of the Japanese themselves.



Universal as the cultivation of the beautiful O-Kiku is throughout the Empire of the Mikado, there is one place where they are never grown, because they are considered unlucky. In the prettily situated town of Himeji, in the province of Harima, there is a great ruined and many-turreted *katchiū-yashiki*, or castle of a *daimio*. In ancient times, amongst the retainers and servants of the great lord who dwelt in it, there was one maid-servant of good family named *O-Kiku*, or the Honourable Miss Chrysanthemum, living in the house of one of the *daimio's* chief retainers. She was held in high esteem, and into her charge were given many precious things, amongst them ten golden dishes. One day there were but nine to be found; and poor little O-Kiku, being unable to find the missing dish or to prove her innocence of any complicity in its disappearance, committed suicide by drowning herself in a well. Soon after, so the story goes (which has been made the subject of many poems, and of a drama called "*Banshu-O-Kiku-no-Sara-yashiki*"), the ghost of the unhappy girl was heard returning nightly to count her dishes. One, two, three, and so on till she came to *Ku-mia* (the ninth). Then the poor ghost would utter a long, despairing cry, and commence counting the dishes again.

The legend goes on that her spirit passed into the body of a strange little insect (found nowhere in all Japan except at Himeji), known as *O-Kiku-mushi*, or *O-Kiku's* fly. The head of this insect bears a certain resemblance to that of the conventional idea of a ghost with long, unkempt hair. Some authorities place the scene of *O-Kiku's* little death drama in *Tōkyō*, as they say that *Banshu* is but a corruption of the old name of an ancient district of that city; but the people of Himeji hold fast to the ghost, and in support of their claim contend that the quarter of the town now known as *Go-Ken-Yashiki* is the identical spot on which the ancient manor-house of the *daimio's* retainer

stood. Whatever historical grounds there may be for the pathetic story, one fact remains indisputable, namely, that chrysanthemums are not cultivated in Go-Ken-Yashiki, because the name of the unfortunate little maid who met with so sad a fate and that of the flower are the same.

There yet remains the lotus, which graces the ponds of many a garden, and whose coral cups and dark green shiny leaves are indeed jewels set in mud. It is only to be expected that a flower so intimately connected with Buddhism as is the lotus, appearing in temple decorations, forming the seat of Buddha, or being held in Buddha's hand, should have a symbolic meaning in the Japanese mind. This exquisite blossom is to it symbolical of the ideal qualities of man; for though growing from the mud it rises a beautiful and pure flower, and thus is an emblem of purity in a wicked world. And just as its perfume sweetens the air of the garden where it blooms, so do the actions of a good man tend to influence those who come in contact with him, and sweeten the lives of others. As it opens in the morning sunshine, so his mind expands and grows more perfect in the light of knowledge. And as it rises on a single upright stem, so is it emblematic of single-mindedness and uprightness of character. And lastly, as the root of the lotus is fit for food, so must the basis of a good man's life be usefulness for others.

There are three types of lotus, all equally beautiful: the pure white, the bright rose pink, and the pale coral. In many a garden they all flourish equally well; stately and beautiful. The white variety is often grown in patches amid the rice fields for the sake of its edible roots; but the latter are almost entirely devoid of taste other than the flavour given to them by the syrup or sauce in which they may have been cooked.

To watch a lotus pond in the rain is an unfailing source of delight. Then as one sees the great cup-like leaves



"THEN THERE ARE THE SCARLET, PINK, AND WHITE AZALEAS . . . WHICH GLINT  
AT ONE ON THE HILLSIDES AMIDST THE TREES . . ."





filling they bend gradually beneath their watery burden, and suddenly, when the latter has reached a certain height in the leaf, the latter bends over and tips the water into the pond with a splash which seems in the dull light as though quicksilver had suddenly been poured out on to the dark green surface. Then the leaf becomes once more erect, and the same automatic filling and emptying goes on in the forest of leaves till the rain ceases and the sunlight falls in caressing warmth once more upon the opening buds and blossoms.

But there are other—many other—lovely plants and flowers which go to make a Japanese garden a thing of beauty and a joy for ever round the whole cycle of the year. There are the glossy-leaved camellia trees often of gigantic size, with their blood-red flowers shining amid the dark green leaves, and falling when the wind stirs the branches to form a crimson carpet beneath, or to float on the surface of some neighbouring pool or rivulet like tiny, fairy argosies. The autumn lily, which is like a large head of honeysuckle with long antennæ, and the scarlet lily, which flourishes amid the waste sand gardens of the seashore. Then there are the scarlet, pink, and white azaleas, which grow amid the rocks in one's garden, and form blots of gay colour amid the mossy greenness of their holding place, or glint at one on the hillsides amidst the trees in mountainous districts; and the blue water-weed that is a bright note of colour in many a pond. Then there is the hydrangea with its light "Wedgwood" blue flowers; the purple campanula, the riotous "morning glory" (*convolvulus*), and last, but not least, the yellow valerian which gives a note of brilliance to many an otherwise undistinguished spot.

All these are inherently beautiful; but seen under the blue sky of Japan, and planted with the artistic skill of a gardener who loves each blossom, not alone for what it is but what it may be when properly applied, one has

flowers in a perfection of arrangement and growth which appeals to sight and mind alike.

But there are, however, other things besides flowers in the garden. Beautiful dragon-flies, butterflies, moths, fire-flies, and occasionally birds amongst flying things; and lizards, frogs, cicada, snails, tortoises, gold and silver fish, and snakes, amongst those which crawl and swim.

The dragon-flies, which hover over the rivulets and tiny pools, are some of them lovely beyond cold description in print. Amongst the most beautiful must be placed the "Tenshitombo" or "Emperor dragon-fly." Its iridescent wings, gleaming in the sunlight with a perfect rainbow of colouring, seem almost too large and powerful for the ghostly body of abnormal slenderness. The largest of all is also handsome, but is scarce. Of this type of dragon-fly the males much outnumber the females, and from that reason children, who are very fond of catching them, when fortunate enough to snare a female tie a cotton or silken thread round her, and attach the end to some blade of grass or twig with the view of attracting the male dragon-flies. The ruse seldom fails, and a pair are soon in possession of the happy children.

Over the surface of the lotus ponds and iris beds other varieties hover with apparently immovable, but actually swiftly-fluttering wings, beautiful as the flowers below them, and almost more fragile.

Of butterflies which haunt the gardens of towns and cities, there are fully a dozen varieties. In the country-gardens this number is frequently largely increased; although, of course, some kinds, as with us, are only found in particular districts. One of the commonest, as well as one of the daintiest, is a snowy white. Not the white we know, but a silvery shade of whiteness, so that its wings look as though cut out of the purest rice paper. The Japanese children love butterflies, and though the boys are by no means absolutely free



(gentle mannered though they are) from a certain unconscious tendency to cruelty, which is, indeed, unhappily characteristic of the children of most nations, the girls are never cruel. The gentleness of the woman soul displays itself in early years, and serves even in childhood to differentiate the sexes very markedly in this particular. The white butterfly is supposed to frequent the rape-seed plant, and when the little girls see it hovering over the *na* they often sing a little song which runs thus :—

Chō-chō, chō-chō, na no ah ni tomare ;  
Na no ha ga iyenara, te, ni tomare,

which, freely translated, is an invitation to the butterfly to settle upon their outstretched hands if unsatisfied by the *na* leaf.

The other butterflies, many of which are distinguished for beautiful colouring, are features of every garden during the warm months, and add to even the primness of a garden of stones, trees, and shrubs alone an element of charm which is perhaps, indeed, the more marked on account of the beautiful insects' sombre environment.

The *semi* or cicadae are well known to every traveller in Japan. They are "insects with voices." More marvellous musicians than those of the tropics, they have one great advantage over the latter in the fact that their song is much less wearying and monotonous, as there is a new kind of singer with a different note for almost every month of the season when they are heard.

There are six or seven kinds in all. The first to come and go is the *natsuzemi*, or the summer *semi*, which makes a sound of increasing shrillness, Ji-i-iiiiiii, till it dies away softly. Small as these *semi* are, three or four of them are capable of making so deafening a ji-i-iiiiii-ing that, when close at hand, one can scarcely hear one's own voice. Fortunately, however, the first comer amongst the tribe of

*semi* musicians is soon succeeded by the *minminzemi*, which is said popularly to chant like a Buddhist priest reciting the *kyō*. And although this is a fanciful exaggeration of the sound it emits, and from which it takes its name, it is a fine "singer," and on hearing its voice for the first time it is impossible to believe that it is that of a mere insect.

In the early autumn, just as the garden begins to take on some of its loveliest tints of foliage, the bell-like tinkling sound of the pretty green-hued *semi*, the *higurashi*, is heard crying *kana-kana-kana*. Then comes the most extraordinary musician of the *semi* family, the *tsuku-tsuku-boshi*, whose music is so like the singing of a bird, that travellers upon hearing its notes for the first time often gaze up into the trees in anticipation of seeing the songster. It takes its name in part from the note of its song, which runs somewhat like this, "*tsuku-tsuku uisu*," repeated twice or thrice, and then the last word repeated several times alone, and "drawn out" increasingly.

To the tuneful cicadae must be added the wonderful bright green grasshopper called by the Japanese *hotoko-no-uma*, or "the horse for the dead." The reason for this strange appellation is not clear, although the head of the insect does bear a slight resemblance to that of a horse. It is a sociable little animal; which will not only enter the house boldly, but will permit itself to be taken up in the hand without alarm. But its voice cannot be compared with the notes of the more musical *semi*. Another member of the orchestra of the garden is also of the grasshopper tribe, and also green. It is a better singer, and (perhaps as are sometimes human vocalists) is shyer of singing in consequence. Its song is really musical, and sounds very much like "*Chon gisu, chon gisu, chon gisu*."

In most gardens there are several kinds of tortoises, some of which are quite pretty and quaint. All tortoises are believed to live for a thousand years; and thus are

frequently depicted in Japanese art as symbolical of longevity. A curious legend is attached to the turtle, which is supposed in popular mythology to be the servant of the Dragon Empire under the sea. It is credited with the power to create out of its breath either clouds, fogs, or a beautiful fairy-like palace at will. As might be supposed, there is a charming Japanese fairy story or folk-tale of Urashima with this peculiar gift of the turtle's as the basis of the story.

The snakes of Japanese gardens are many of them very beautiful, and are amphibious, coming out of the water on hot days to sun themselves on the rocks or sandy paths skirting the pools. In many parts of Japan it is considered very unlucky to kill a snake, and so it happens that should one come into the house by any chance, it is imperative that it is politely ejected by the gentle suasion of a bamboo rod by one of the maids rather than killed or put out by superior force. There is a saying in Izumo that if one kills a snake without great provocation, one is sure to afterwards find its head in the box where the cooking rice is stored.

There are many folk-tales connected with the insects and animals of the fields and gardens of Japan. Some are quaint, and others bear a most strange resemblance to the ideas of metamorphoses met with in the tales of ancient Greece.

One of the insects which comes in from the garden and buzzes to its death in the lamps is known as the *sanemori*. The name is also that of a famous warrior of old Japan, who fell fighting bravely in a rice field after his horse had failed him. The story goes that, when overtaken and killed by his enemy, his soul became an insect which devoured rice, and was given the name of Sanemori-San by the peasantry of Izumo. Fearful of the depredations of this famous warrior who was metamorphosed into an insect, on certain nights during the season of rice the



peasants of the district light fires in the fields and play on flutes or bamboo pipes with a view of attracting the insect to the fires, calling out at the same time a pressing invitation: "O Sanemori, augustly deign to augustly come here!" A religious rite is also performed, and a straw figure, made in the shape of a horse and rider, is then either burned or cast into the nearest canal or river—the peasants believing that when this act has been accomplished the fields will be immune from the attacks of the *sanemori*.

The moths which enter the house at dusk are many of them extremely large and beautiful. Some are welcome because of their loveliness. But there is one at least which is of ill-omen, known as the *okori-chōchō* or ague moth, whose dusky brown wings, flecked with silver grey, and large body are said to bring fever into every house that it enters. And with the moths of various kinds come innumerable beetles, one kind of which, the *goki-kaburi*, is supposed to devour human eyes.

Fire-flies also come glinting in the darkest corners of the room, and shining in the shadowed garden after sunset with a light as of tiny stars fallen from the dark blue sky. And on the ceiling of many a house will suddenly appear a little grey lizard in search of flies and other prey; a pretty, harmless creature, which no one disturbs.

And when night has fallen and strange shadows appear in the garden below the *engawa*, and bushes which bore normal shapes in the sunlight suddenly seem to take upon themselves weird resemblances to animals and terrible uncouth beasts, sometimes in the distance is heard the voice of one crying as though in terrible pain, "*Ho-to-to-gi-su*," which is also the name of the bird whose mournful utterance has given rise to numbers of uncanny tales. By many people it is not thought to be a bird at all, but a wandering soul from the Land of Darkness, which has

strayed out of the Realm of the Dead over the sunless hills of Shiede, which all poor souls must cross to reach the place of judgment. Once in every year they say it comes, at the end of the fifth month, on its weary way to the Kingdom of Emma, who is the King of Death.

Very different is the song of another garden visitant, the moving, gently-caressing call of the *yamabato*, which few can hear without a responsive call in their heart.

These then are some of the beautiful trees, exquisite blossoms, quaint and interesting things one finds in the gardens of Japan, each of which contributes in some measure to the perennial charm which such gardens always exercise. But alas! even the gardens of Japan, many of them, and more especially the ancient ones, which can never be replaced, are passing away as other ancient things to make way for the more material things which progress and modernity demand. Many who live under the blue Japanese sky, and in the brilliant sunshine of that beautiful land, fear the passing of these exquisite gardens more than of aught else. But alas! not alone from the gardens of Japan, but from the wider-spreading land itself much of the beauty and peace of ancient times and things seems doomed all too soon to pass away.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ART AND ART INSTINCTS OF THE JAPANESE RACE

IN no respect is what may be called the spirit of the Japanese, or "*Yamato Damashii*," seen to greater perfection than in all departments of Art. A very common error is to estimate the artistic tendencies or accomplishment of a nation by the art of the artists rather than by the art of the people at large. It is, we admit, a rough and ready method of summing up, and affords critics in particular an easy means of arriving at some sort of judgment which will (because arrived at by critics) run few risks of dispute from the general public. It is a common practice, too, when speaking of a nation's art, at once to think of some individual painter or painters belonging indisputably to a school of a national type. Thus the art of Italy to many means only the art of Michael Angelo, Correggio, or Paul Veronese; whilst that of France suggests Corot, Bouguereau, Meissonier, Rosa Bonheur, or perhaps Gerome; and the art of Spain Velasquez or Murillo; and not the art of the nation itself. But this latter, though almost always something inferior to that of its great artists, is also, generally speaking, something very different. And thus it is that though one may gauge from the work of a nation's artists how far towards perfection it has travelled, and the prevailing sentiment which has inspired it at different periods, this can never



give one a complete or accurate comprehension of the attainment in art of the nation in general.

The country that has in the past produced the most notable artists, dramatists, poets, or writers has not by any means been always the one to show the highest plane of either artistic, dramatic, poetic, or literary attainment. Indeed, it has frequently happened that the general level in the arts of that particular people has been low. It must be freely admitted that a truly artistic nation has the best chance of producing great artists; for one thing, the appreciation with which their work will be received is in itself an incentive, but to take into consideration no one save the artists (as the term is generally understood) in estimating the art of the whole race to which they belong is likely to lead to an incomplete and often to even very misleading judgment. We in England are too apt to consider art as only costly objects of ornament, pictures, statuary, and decorative work of a noticeable character, and not as of being an integral part of the nation's life, and to be applied to articles of common use in daily life. Such art as we have is mainly for the rich and the cultured few with us. But the art of Japan is of the people, is as far reaching in its effects as the life of them, and it is woven into the fabric of their daily life—a thing for the enjoyment and elevation of the mass, and not for the pleasure of the individual alone.

Thus it is that the art of the Japanese people presents a very different problem for consideration to that of the art of artists. Its main object is to wed beauty to utility, and by this, as it were, to create the artistic element in objects the reason for whose existence is primarily usefulness. To do this art may be said to be capable of application in three ways:—

(a) In a direct manner by the adoption of artistic shapes for articles the materials used in making

which have already been settled more or less by necessity.

(b) In an indirect way by decorative work upon such articles.

(c) By arrangement.

It will be easily understood after even a comparatively superficial knowledge of Japanese art has been obtained, how thoroughly the people as a whole have recognised the possibilities of art development along the three lines we have indicated; and how wonderfully many articles which would seem to possess few possibilities have been beautified and almost transformed by this truly artistic people.

But not alone is the art instinct of the race seen in the decoration of their homes, clothing, and articles of daily use. It appears in the most unexpected places. Probably few things are for at least half the year more unlovely than the rice fields which meet one almost everywhere in Japan. When uncultivated and in the earlier stages of cultivation, these "fields" are little more than mud tanks—and most evil-smelling mud at that—surrounded by low walls of hard-pressed earth.

To the ordinary mind there are no possibilities of art in these. But to the Japanese to effect an improvement under conditions which seem the most unpromising is an exercise of the art instinct. They cannot change the liquid mud, which is essential to the rearing of the tender rice plants, nor is it possible to substitute for the low, ugly mud walls anything less utilitarian. But the art instinct of the race rises to the occasion, and has succeeded in making the rice fields in a sense even interesting and beautiful. We have said materials cannot here be changed, nor can the black mud be done away with; but the shape of the embanking walls can be varied, and thus interest and variety be given to what in itself would be monotonous and without a vestige of beauty. The environing walls are so moulded

that three, four, five, six, seven, and even eight-sided fields are seen, and frequently the curving lines of the walls are of so graceful a trend that this in itself constitutes an element of beauty.

Later on, when the black ooze has become transformed into patches of the most exquisite green by the young rice plants, curious signs appear in all the fields. On every hand, sticking up above the level of the waving green, are countless objects like arrows with large white feathers. The slender shafts are of bamboo, and these are split down the centre for nearly a third of their length. Into the cleft thus formed are slipped strips of white paper—which at a distance look like feathers—and on these are inscribed ideographs, constituting a Shintō charm or *ofuda*. After this has been carefully inserted in the split cane, the ends of the latter are firmly tied together.

These arrow-like objects, with their prayer “feathers,” which ask for a blessing on the crop, or express some sentiment of adoration or thankfulness, are thick in the rice fields, silent witnesses of faith or superstition (whichever the point from which the traveller may choose to regard them), and quaint memorials of an ancient custom.

Also sometimes around the smaller rice fields are erected tiny bamboo fences along the top of which is stretched a cord. The pieces of paper attached to this, which flutter in the faintest breeze as it sends the rice plants shimmering with a satiny sheen, are not to scare the birds. They, too, are emblems of the people’s faith. These tiny paper cuttings, like a fringe though they at first appear, are *gohei* hung at regular distances apart. This cord with its paper adornments symbolises the sacred emblem of Shintōism, and within the space it encloses no malign influence may enter. No scorching sun shall burn up the young plants, nor tempest destroy the crop. Neither shall the de-



vastating locust nor hungry bird come where the white-winged arrows are.

With most other nations a wall, whether it be of a house or of a penitentiary, is generally *per se* a somewhat unlovely object. Only when "weathered," creeper-grown, or stained by Nature's hand does it become tolerable from an artistic point of view. To improve it Western people have generally fallen back upon decorative ornament; or excrescences with which to break up its monotony. Not so with the artistic Japanese. Ours is the policy of concealment; that of the Japanese is to go to the root of the evil, and strive to beautify the wall itself. In Japan almost all walls (if one except those of "foreign" buildings) are made of hewn stones generally pyramidal in form, and hammered outward at their bases into an earthen bank. The common Japanese wall is a wonder to every one who sees it. It is never straight up and down, because to that particular feature may be traced not a little of the in-artistic and monotonous character of English and American ordinary domestic buildings in particular. The line of the Japanese wall curves softly outward as it approaches the ground. This feature, too, is not reserved for the walls of great or important buildings, fine temples, and the castles and palaces of the *daimio*. It is seen in the walls of the least important buildings, the tiniest shrine, and in those of the most modern of all recently erected temples.

To apply decorative designs to articles of common use is one of the simplest methods of beautifying them. The Japanese have used and adapted it to perfection. Westerners generally leave such matters severely alone. What indeed should we think of a sack-maker who beautified the bags he manufactured for conveying potatoes, grain, flour, and other articles? And yet the Japanese seldom fail to decorate even such utilitarian objects as sacks with a simple design, which does something to break up monotony. On



THE  
LAKESIDE  
PARK  
AND  
GARDENS  
OF  
THE  
CITY  
OF  
NEW  
YORK



A PEACEFUL CORNER ON A PLACID LAKE.



them one constantly sees—more especially at the seaports on the *hatobas* (wharves), or in the *godowns* (warehouses)—sacks on the sides of which are imprinted maple leaves, a chrysanthemum (conventional or natural in form), a sprig of cherry or plum blossom, a fir branch, or a sprig of bamboo, rice ears, birds in flight, or even sketchy representations of Fuji-San ; always in good proportion to the size of the article they are intended to embellish, and seldom in the centre, but at one corner. The colours used are chiefly the blues (which are the commonest in use in China and Japan), a peculiar, pale, but charming shade of green, or a salmon pink.

Even the fragile paper-bags of commerce, similar to those used in England for groceries, green-groceries, haberdashery, etc., and the wrapping-paper used in the shops are seldom without a sprig of flowers, a leaf, or a geometrical pattern. Often the larger sheets of paper in which silk and cotton goods are wrapped are made delightful by designs which are both beautiful in form and colouring.

The art instinct of the race “expresses” itself in these little ways. In the bronze axle-heads of the *jinrikishas* one can generally find a chaste pattern ; at the least the metal is beaten into some kind of irregular or simple design. The great and ever-abiding principle with the Japanese is to beautify.

In the more modern hotels, and especially those catering for Europeans, and those which have adopted “foreign” ideas, which include blankets and sheets, one will frequently find that the former articles, in which there is probably a pattern or stripe already present, will have that decorative feature so manipulated in the folding, that when it is laid on the bed for use it presents quite a distinct design. And sometimes the boy or maid who is responsible for the folding of the sheets will do them much in the way a skilled house parlour-maid does the *serviettes* in England ; the

object being to destroy the monotony of whiteness, and avoid a simple square or oblong of material. In the same way the Japanese chamber-maid will set out the toilet articles in a distinct pattern upon one's dressing-table, instead of in the "serried rows" beloved by her English equivalent.

The same idea governs the Japanese cook. He or she will serve a lunch that will be an artistic delight from the judicious use of various-coloured porcelain plates and dishes in conjunction with the different colours of the articles of food. The lemon-coloured custards will be served in a blue bowl; the salmon pink of fish made to contrast with a silvery-white or pale-green dish, or pure white rice served on a pale-blue dish, and perhaps garnished with some shreaded seaweed of a slightly deeper shade. And in the disposition of their edible goods—sweets, biscuits or cakes—even the street vendors use an amount of artistic taste regarding the colours of the platters on which they are displayed, which would put an English high-class confectioner to shame.

In the shops where articles of many colours are—the china warehouses, the drapers, the sellers of ancient fabrics and curios—runs the same thread of artistic feeling. In the first-named the arrangement of the goods will never be conglomerate. The colours will not "scream" at each other from one side of the shop to the other; a discreet care will have been exercised that each article has its chance of appeal to the purchaser's sense of beauty. In the second, the fabrics may not be "conveniently" arranged to European ideas. The silks may not have all the shades of one colour massed together, but a most beautiful scale of harmonies will certainly be visible to the seeing eye. And the beautifully-flowered cottons of native make will be so arranged and manipulated that an impression, more like that arising from a series of pictures than a certain

number of bales of goods, will be produced upon the mind of the beholder. And in the third case, each exquisite example of the potter's, weaver's, enameller's or metal-worker's art will be so isolated that there is no sense of confusion created in the possible purchaser's mind; no tiring of the eye that it may do this necessary work of isolation for itself.

Though art in arrangement has been introduced by the Japanese into all classes of shops, even those openly catering for a foreign *clientèle*, and dealing largely in European and American goods, it is in the native stores that one sees the most perfect development in what, for want of a better term, may be called "the art of the shops." Here even the wrapping-paper of the parcels, the string with which they are tied up, is made to contribute to the general artistic effect; fine red, or pure white, or green string taking the place of the dun-coloured twine used in most English shops; and the number of threads being the logical sequence of the need for greater strength, one obtains around one's parcel a parti-coloured ribbon, with each strand placed side by side and not twisted or jumbled up together. The ends, too, of this ribbon of coloured string are usually not snipped off anyhow, but are carefully cut into a point, a V-shape, or swallow-tail.

The same sense of art which is seen in the shape, colour, or arrangement of purely native articles and fabrics, has been brought to bear where the Japanese have adopted European or other foreign articles or ideas. In many respects it must be conceded that their art is on a small scale. We see this in the size of their teacups, which are, of course, native; and in the size of the pipes and tobacco pouches, which they adopted from the Dutch settlers three centuries ago; and also in their brushes and other articles of domestic utility. The Japanese have a great idea of the scale of proportion. In their fragile



houses, which are mostly small, large articles would be out of place, just as would also large schemes of design. Amongst the numerous articles they have adopted from European and Americans, perhaps none are more characteristic than drinking-glasses. Glass was not known to the Japanese until introduced from the West, and the glasses of civilisation, more particularly those of Germany, used for beer (which is in its light varieties becoming an increasingly popular drink) were of course entirely "out of focus." So it happened when the Japanese adopted beer-glasses that the first alteration they made was in their size. If this had not been done they would have appeared, in relation to the Japanese dinner-service, much as an ice-pail would to an ordinary English tumbler. Thus it is that a thirsty German in Japan must be always in despair when drinking "lager" out of native glasses, which are generally considerably smaller than the smallest tumblers used in England for claret cup.

The adoption of the Western idea of windows has been of slow growth. At first the use of glass windows (which in Japan never or seldom open) was confined to the foreign-built houses, and a few of the leading hotels which catered for Europeans and tourists. It was only when the possibilities of their introduction into native houses began to be considered that their art side was thought of. They were, of course, neither necessary as a means of ventilation nor for light. The Japanese house is (as we have pointed out elsewhere) "all ventilation"; and the translucent *shōji* admit quite a sufficiency of light according to Japanese ideas. Glass windows with the Japanese were adopted simply as an art effect. They enabled the person in the house to see the delightful pictures of garden, street, and other kinds of life without, which formerly was only possible when the *shōji* were slid back and the house was thrown open. The Japanese

window is not, because the people are so truly artistic, merely a square or rectangular framework in which glass is fastened, as is the case with us. It is usually a wide band of glass running the whole width of the *shōji*, placed at just the right distance above the floor to enable a person seated on the latter to see out without effort.

But in the use of glass the Japanese mind was confronted by the bare space, which it artistically abhors. The difficulty was a real one. A pattern would destroy the purpose for which this Western material was adopted—the uninterrupted view. But the space could not be left entirely blank. So it came to pass that very frequently at one end of a window one finds traced in the glass a tiny design of the sacred mountain, Fuji-San. The wide uncovered space no longer exists, but nevertheless the view remains unspoiled.

The same story is almost equally true of all the other things which modern Japan has adopted from the West. The articles of domestic use—pots, pans, brushes—have most of them undergone a subtle change, which, whilst not in the least degree destroying their usefulness, has served, as it were, to lift them out of the ruck of common things.

Invariably the means used are of the simplest. The most exquisite fabrics have colour effects of astonishing beauty introduced by the mere application of other material to the surface of the original or basic fabric. A piece of patchwork colour, a few silken threads, and upon the *kimono*, of say apricot satin, blossoms a wonderful blue giant clematis or purple iris. A small piece of ruddy brown silk, and yet again a few threads of dark brown or olive-green silk, and a maple leaf in all its glory of colour hangs as though dropped down out of the sky on the sleeve of a dainty little lady's gown. And so on.

Another distinguishing feature of Japanese art of the people, as well as of the great artists, is the dislike of

symmetry, or perhaps it would be more correct to say uniformity. It is almost impossible to find an accurate "pair" of anything of native manufacture or design in Japan into the scheme of which it has been possible to introduce artistic feeling. A pair of vases are scarcely ever exactly alike in every detail. The beautiful bronze candlesticks which one sees in most of the metal-workers' shops are never pairs; for if resembling one another in general design or in form, their minor details will surely upon closer examination be found to differ. Once a bet was made between two Englishmen in Yokohama that one of them would find a *pair* of candlesticks. After a morning spent in ransacking the shops of Hon-chō-dōri, the searcher returned in triumph to his hotel bearing in his hands two small candlesticks of fine bronze, the *motif* of the design of which was a pine-tree, with a dragon leaning against the trunk, the animal's tail forming the handle. Everything seemed the same in each candlestick, and the purchaser thought he had won his bet, which would have half-paid for the bronzes. But, alas! a minute examination showed that there was one small branch more on one of the trees, almost concealed by the foot of the dragon, and that in one case the dragon's tongue was lolling out and in the other was not!

Very few writers upon the work of Japanese artists are entirely in agreement. There is always, we think, a greater likelihood of arriving at a just estimate (and, indeed, fewer difficulties in doing so) when considering the art of the people themselves. The chief characteristics of this are the desire for purity of line, a recognition of the value of space in decorative schemes of all kinds, delicacy of taste, and a thoroughness in execution.

Regarding the first-named distinction, it is apparent in almost all things to every intelligent observer. The Japanese draw rather than paint. This love of line is



apparent in such dissimilar things as the mud walls of their rice fields and the scheme of their decorations on paper screens ; in their house walls, where stone is used, and the delicate placing of flower or foliage in vases. It is not, perhaps, easy to say why this love of line has so permeated the Japanese idea of art. It may possibly be the clarity of the climate, which makes masses of light and shade less obtrusive and less frequent than in many other lands ; it may, on the other hand, be the influence of the mountains, and more especially of the exquisite Fuji-San, the outline of whose extraordinary peak is so constantly silhouetted against the sky, and can be studied by the inhabitants of more than a dozen provinces. Certain it is that Fuji-San has verily instilled its beautiful form into the minds and hearts of the people, and the prominent part the mountain plays in their art is indicative of a far-reaching influence.

Few artists excel the Japanese in flower drawings ; but a close examination of some of the best work of the masters seems to indicate that most of these drawings by the great artists of Japan are more or less influenced by tradition. The originator of the Japanese method of drawing flowers was undoubtedly a true impressionist, who depicted merely what seemed to him the chief characteristic or characteristics of the plants he was drawing, often to the exclusion of other minor characteristics, and, as a consequence, producing a mannerism which most of the artists who followed him have imitated. As has been the case in other lands than Japan, the followers of a school have often been led into exaggeration because they have copied certain characteristics of that school rather than what they themselves saw in painting certain more or less unvarying models. Thus it is that one often finds the less popular flowers, which are least frequently drawn, are much more natural and true to life than those which have been depicted by artists of all generations, and for the drawing of which

something of a rule or method has become recognised. There are some flowers, for example, which, as drawn, show marked characteristics that are scarcely visible in the flowers themselves, and their presence in the drawings has arisen through the minute observation of some master of former times, who put these veinings of leaves, spots upon the stem, etc., in his drawing, which have been exaggerated by disciples until they really monopolise an attention which the features in the real plants would never do.

In flower arrangement the Japanese do not go for mass or colour to the extent that they do for line. In fact, many of the most beautiful effects we have seen have been produced not by a clever grouping of contrasting or complementary colours, not by a bold massing of a daring colour scheme, but by line arrangement. How complete an art this flower arrangement is can only be grasped after a close acquaintance with it and careful study. To use certain plants or flowers in combination is to the Japanese idea incorrect. The iris and the narcissus would scarcely be used by an artist in flower arrangement; but the narcissus and ilex are considered appropriate for combined use. The willow and the plum blossom are scarcely ever seen (they would certainly not be used together by a superstitious flower-arranger), as, according to the Chinese legend, they bring bad luck. Another point worthy of note is the fact that neither foliage nor flowers must be used out of season. To the Japanese idea a "forced" blossom is not only unnatural but distasteful; and in the case of flowers which bloom through a period of several months, as do the iris, chrysanthemum, and some others, then the arrangement must vary each month to be in artistic keeping with their stages of natural development. Particular blossoms, too, have come to be regarded as only being strictly suitable for certain rooms and occasions; and the different types of vases are used according to a determined artistic



A FLOWER FESTIVAL, WHICH IS USUALLY A JAPANESE  
“BANK HOLIDAY.”





idea. In a sleeping apartment, convolvulus ("morning glory") is frequently used in beautiful hanging vases; whilst (the reason we have not been able to discover) by many flower artists it is considered improper to place a red-berried plant in a room where guests are to sit or sleep. The plant should be confined to the ante-room through which they would pass; a single spray of berries of a fine line, set in a bronze or porcelain stand or vase, being sufficient decoration in itself.

Of all flower arrangements none have to be more perfectly studied and produced on lines of strict etiquette than those used for weddings. With the Japanese the particular direction of the lines in a design has its own significance and even importance; and in the case of the decorations for a marriage feast even the minutest detail must be studied, for each has its distinct symbolism. Pine branches are largely used, and it is imperative that these should not only incline in a particular way, but it is equally important that the stems should rise from the vase or stand boldly and firmly massed together so that an impression of vigorous growth should be made upon the beholder. The branches are bound round with a white paper called *miku hiki* (also used for wrapping up certain varieties of presents, and used at funerals); and this is secured by red and gold threads, which are intended to symbolise the union of the male and female. The *kakemono*, hung on the walls for this occasion, must be chiefly of pines, bamboos, and plum-trees; although there are usually others depicting storks, the sign of good luck; an old man and woman, signifying longevity for the bride and bridegroom; or a tortoise, which has also the symbolic meaning of long life.

To watch a professional flower-arranger at work—and there is scarcely a village in Japan, however small, in which one or more cannot be found (in the large towns there are many)—is an art education in itself. He has by him (or, if

he comes to one's house, brings with him) bundles of twigs, leaves, blossoms, string, paper, and all the materials of his art. He sets to work with a methodical exactness bred of long experience and much study. First he selects his twig, blossom, or foliage, which he cuts to the exact length which will fit the vase or bowl and show to the best advantage. To a Western mind an inch more or less of stem is a matter of little moment. To a Japanese that inch more or less will make the difference between a success and a failure. Then the artist takes perhaps a spray of foliage, some of the leaves of which will not be in accord with the particular scheme of lines he has in view. What does he do? He takes it in his hands, and (there is no more expressive or comprehensive term) gently massages the leaves and stems, pulling them this way and that as they become supple in his fingers until they conform with the idea which he has. If necessary to add beauty or finish or merit of any kind to the design, he will tear some of the leaves so that their ragged edges may give the finishing touch he seeks to the work of art he has so deftly created.

In the term flower arrangement is included that of foliage, which, indeed, plays a very important (even preponderant) part in decorative work. A rule, which can be understood by even the Western mind and concerns all of the best arrangements of Japanese artists, is that all the twigs and branches must follow the natural bent of the plant when growing.

So elaborate is this truly Japanese art that even professional flower-arrangers frequently find it necessary to devote their entire attention to certain varieties of designs. Thus it sometimes happens that if one desires an arrangement of particular foliage or blossoms, even of a perfectly suitable character, the artist, who may have been summoned to the house for the purpose, will politely decline to attempt the task. Explaining that he "knows" the "honourable"



bamboo, cherry-blossom, iris, or orchis, but has no acquaintance with the equally "honourable" plum, wistaria, willow, or peony. And if this is so, it is best to let the artist conjure with the particular foliage and blossoms which he has probably studied for many years. Concerning the exquisite result of his manipulations one need have no sort of anxiety.

All this beautiful work is arranged upon certain carefully devised rules, and follows well-defined principles; that in which three lines are employed is one of the simplest. Then follows the five-line scheme of arrangement divided into "heads" as follows: (*a*) The principal; (*b*) The sub-principal; (*c*) Support; (*d*) Secondary; (*e*) Tertiary. Upon these lines, and those of the more complicated of seven and nine, are most Japanese flower arrangements constructed.

If the delicacy of the Japanese idea does not appeal to the average Western mind, surely the economy may, at least in most cases, save those indeed of persons to whom the mere extravagance of extravagance irresistibly appeals. These will continue to employ such schemes of decoration as are indicated by using fifteen thousand roses to deck a ballroom, and to fancy bouquets of the type in which thousands of Parma violets are compressed into the least possible space, and surrounded by a stiff and inartistic palisading of myrtle or laurel leaves!

The same perception of and love for purity of line which distinguishes the department of Japanese art to which we have just referred applies not alone to flowers. It is the same with the trees; both those in the gardens and the strange miniature productions in pots. In each case they are almost invariably trained to produce a graceful and beautiful outline. Indeed, it is rather the outline of the tree in Japan than the foliage which impresses one at first sight. And the Japanese artist frequently applies this

same idea to his representations of trees on vases, *kakemono*, screens, etc. Often they are but washes of ink or colour showing little or no detail, merely dainty silhouettes of the particular tree or plant which has been selected for reproduction.

The Japanese appreciation of the artistic importance of space is to be seen in every department of life. It plainly declares itself in every design, in the forms of decoration, and in most objects of art. To the Japanese mind the idea of overcrowding is anathema. In the business houses it is the spaciousness of the arrangement of the goods, the isolation of particularly handsome or rare articles which attracts—not the overwhelming overplus of stock with which one's eyes are dazzled and assailed in Western stores and shops; just as it is a single blossom, a single spray of foliage, a single leaf, which so often truly decorates a screen, a piece of wrapping-paper, or a panel, whether of lacquer or other material. To the Japanese mind economy of detail is only another term for effect; and this economy they have learned to use to the very highest possible advantage.

The Japanese for this reason can never become entirely at home in an English or American house. In their eyes our crowded drawing-rooms present not only the appearance but also the ineradicable idea of ostentatious display, and some features at least of a badly-arranged museum or warehouse. And when, from acquaintance with our methods, this idea may have in some slight measure worn off, they are confronted with yet another difficulty—monotony. Accustomed as they are to a constant change of ornaments in their own homes, where from the family stock of curios (whether large or small) some precious or artistic object is constantly being drawn to replace others, which are relegated to the background for a time so as to ensure the change which the Japanese so fully recognise as







A MEAL SIMPLY AND DAINTILY SERVED.

being good for the sight and restful and yet stimulating to the brain, the changelessness of the ornaments in an average English dwelling becomes appallingly monotonous.

There has never been much dispute as to the thoroughness of Japanese workmanship. Even the demands of Europe and America for shoddy lacquer work, impossibly cheap screens, fireplace decorations, and vases, has happily not yet caused the Japanese to entirely prostitute their art, or honesty of execution. Indeed, much of the bad Japanese "stuff" has been—well, made elsewhere. Nowadays it must be admitted, however, that many vases which would have been broken up twenty years ago, or even a decade ago, because of slight imperfections of manufacture, tiny flaws, unevenness of the glaze, untrueness of the shape, are seized upon by merchants for export to meet the Western demand for the cheap and nasty, which is so detrimental to the artistic life of most European nations.

Regarding the delicacy of taste, which we have claimed as one of the four chief characteristics of the art of the Japanese people, various views have been from time to time expressed. The use of such phrases as "the gorgeous East," "Oriental luxury," "barbaric colouring and magnificence," the "crimson glory of the Far East," etc., have tended to create a distinctly erroneous impression in many people's mind regarding the art and life of Japan. To them, indeed, the East is the East, and they do not, therefore, realise that terms true of India, Burmah, Persia, and perhaps even of China in a less degree, are by no means true when applied to Japan. But though this inexact extravagance of language is undoubtedly one source of the wrong impression many people have of Japan and Japanese art colouring, it is not the only one. The matter of climate plays a very important part in the effect upon the mind made by colouring. Under the bright blue sky of Japan and its dazzling yellow sunshine, much Japanese

colouring must appear ultra-vivid, therefore noticeably gaudy, which in a less clear atmosphere would lose much of this characteristic. Therefore to estimate the scale of Eastern colouring it is necessary to see it on the spot.

The Japanese, too, have learnt the art (which is apparently as yet unappreciated by Western manufacturers to a very small extent, if at all) of making their brightest colours soft without robbing them of their clarity. With us a soft or so-called, "art" shade in a fabric is almost invariably dull in tone. It is not, as with the Japanese, a mere softening or subduing of the shade; and one is forced to confess that, seen beside the Japanese colours in a like scale, ours are "muddy" and ineffective.

In the dress of the average Japanese there is no note of mere gorgeousness. The costumes of the children form, it is true, altogether delightful blots of colour, introducing that note of vivid life and happiness with which no nation can afford altogether to dispense. But the grown women wear, whether in cotton or silken fabrics, the beautiful soft shades of greys, mauves, blues, yellows, and apricots; whilst the men wear chiefly greys or dust-coloured fabrics; the coolies and *kurumaya* blues.

The working-classes, both men and women, wear, as a general rule, indigo blue. The sobriety and simplicity of taste of the Japanese, a simplicity which is, indeed, strangely at variance with the practice of most other Eastern peoples, is seen in the absence of jewellery. It is not for lack of precious and even gorgeous jewels, however, for they have amethysts, both purple and mauve, crystals of many hues, blood-red stones, and pearls. But these are bought to be applied to art purposes, or by the rich merely to look at and treasure as precious things which are amongst the best of gifts from the workshop of Nature, not often for personal adornment. Probably the Japanese people are the only civilised race which, whilst



appreciating the value of gems, yet scarcely ever use them as articles of jewellery.

The statement that the Japanese possess a passion for the infinitely little finds a place in most books upon Japan ; and the idea is one which has gained such currency that it is difficult to combat. Not even the building of battleships, the "big" things accomplished by them of recent times in the field of war, can apparently disabuse the average Western mind of this idea—that everything in Japan is on a small scale. That it is a mistaken idea the battleships of modern times ; the great temples of ancient days ; the gigantic statue of Buddha at Kamakura, those huge figures of him at Nara and Kyōtō ; the great bronze bell of Kyōtō, which is the largest hanging bell in the world, the others at Nara and Chion-in ; the walled castle of Osaka of ancient days—all serve to prove the fallacy of this idea of devotion to mere littleness, at least as such.

A more intimate knowledge of the Japanese people, their home life and their ideals of art and methods of thought, will, however, best serve to remove the erroneous idea, and show that it is rather to a very highly-developed sense of proportion that this seeming love of the minute is in reality traceable.

The Japanese home is devoid of furniture, as we know the term. The floor space is therefore left free for graceful and effective movement. The comparatively tiny apartment at once assumes a proportion of usefulness quite equal to that of a large European room encumbered by a hundred and one useless articles, in addition to the many large objects which the sitting upon chairs or settees, instead of upon the floor or thick *futon*, makes imperative. Indeed, living on the floor, as one does in Japan, gives to the room, the home itself, and the outside objects not only a different perspective to that which they would possess if seen from the height of chairs or stools, but at the same

time alters the scale of proportion of all articles in that home entirely. The Japanese table, both as regards height and area, represents much what a stool would to us. Imagine an attempt to serve an ordinary English meal on such an article! It will be easily appreciated, too, that the actual level of one's eyes, when sitting on the floor in the Japanese fashion and when seated on an ordinary European chair, represents a difference of between two feet and two feet six inches. It should also be remembered that in the case of the Japanese themselves—whose height is lower on the average than ours—the line of sight comes still nearer the ground. Thus we venture to think it will be understood that the articles which are smaller in Japan than with us, which have been copied from us, been even reduced in size—for example, tumblers, certain pots, brushes, etc.—are not so from a predilection of the little, but an appreciation of the true proportion these things should bear to other existing things, and the needs of the home.

There is also an ethical as well as an artistic reason for this smallness. The Japanese have long ago learned the lesson, which some Westerns are but just beginning to learn, viz., that it is not the most admirable thing to take a great quantity of any food or drink when a little will suffice. The highest pleasure is often extracted from the little things of life. A Japanese "sips" either his wine, tea, or *saké*, and eats but small quantities of any given food. With us even the educated are apt to think that to swallow a quantity is to produce the most pleasing and even satisfactory result. Watch a working-man taking his beer, or the lower middle-class woman her tea. The first swallows it in pints, and thinks he gets the taste best in that way. The second takes her tea in cups—and frequently several of them—which would seem of the capacity of bowls to the Japanese. The latter have learned to sip, to taste, and to satisfy their needs with small quantities of both meats and

drinks. Their beer glasses do not contain "imperial" pints—merely a couple or three tablespoonsful; their little teacups about the same quantity or less; their wine glasses, which in reality, except in the most Europeanised families and some "foreign" hotels, are small china basins, about two tablespoonsful of liquid. It is the same with their tobacco pipes. They contain not a fiftieth of an ounce; nearer six grains or even less of the weed. Three or four whiffs and the native desire for tobacco is satisfied.

There is yet another side to the art of a nation which does not concern itself with what is produced, but with the environment and life of the producer.

Amongst the many lessons which may be learned from the Japanese is the one that, in their idea, environment counts. That the greatest art is most likely to be, as it is, most easily produced under favourable conditions.

In some of the most famous workshops in which the exquisite and almost priceless *cloisonné* and lacquer work is produced, the workers are cut off from the outer world, and sit in rooms with spotless matting floors in undisturbed peace. There are no noisy workshops, badly ventilated and full of the distractions of clamorous streets, in the near vicinity. In one manufactory we have in mind the outlook for the workmen is a garden of great beauty, with tiny bridges spanning miniature streams, where flowers bloom, and in reed-grown pools the goldfish swim. And it is frequently the case that even where a factory is specifically engaged in turning out porcelain, lacquer or stuff goods for the export market, the environment will nevertheless be picturesque, healthful, and elevating. Working amid such conditions as those we have described, there is little need for wonder if the goods produced are of an artistic merit and completeness of workmanship, which may be looked for in vain from the roaring, stewing, noisy factories of the West.



But it is not alone the "big" man or the wealthy worker who produces the best art in Japan. From the tiny shops in Tōkyō, Kyōtō, Nagasaki, Yokohama, and other large towns has come, and still does come, some of the most exquisite lacquer, bronzes, silver enamel ware, and *cloisonné* made. Many a Japanese workman will carve, with a penknife and a sharpened nail, designs which could only be copied by European workmen with the most elaborate tools. Upon many a little stall, which has no claim to the dignified title of shop, are displayed carvings, silver work, lacquer, and *cloisonné*, made in some back-parlour, which for beauty of design, carefulness of execution, and taste in colouring, could not be rivalled by that produced by the most noted workmen employed by the large manufacturers.

It can be easily gathered from these facts that the life of the maker of such beautiful things—which in their method of production and design bear no impress of mechanical work, but of personality—must have elements of an artistic nature woven into it. Thus it is that one finds the pleasures of even the common people in Japan are of an artistic nature. Almost all the public holidays synchronise with flower festivals. The Viewing of the Cherry Blossom in Tōkyō is a Japanese "Bank Holiday," for example. From morning till night huge crowds of common folk, as well as of the upper classes, throng the long avenue of cherry-trees at Mukōjima, along the left bank of the Sumida-gawa, gazing at the wealth of exquisite blossom silhouetted against the deep blue April sky. There is, however, no disorder, no struggling, and no special force of police (as with us) make their appearance to control the pressing multitude. This world of the workers gazes at the trees, goes into raptures over the beautiful blossoms, drinks tea, and eats sweetmeats in family parties at the *chaya* (tea-houses) and restaurants, rejoices with the smallest child



A MOONLIGHT SCENE, THE SIMPLE AND DECORATIVE BEAUTY OF WHICH TYPE OF SUBJECT HAS APPEALED TO SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS OF JAPANESE ARTISTS.





there; and then goes quietly home imbued with a sense of beauty, and refreshed in mind and heart, as the night wind commences to stir the trees and shakes down a nacre-coloured carpet on the earth beneath them.

At the end of the avenue most will have paused to whisper the pathetic legend which relates to the tiny temple or shrine, erected on the spot where the body of Mmewaka was found by a priest after this child of noble family had been stolen by a slave merchant in the tenth century. The story tells how, after roaming the kingdom in search of her little one, the mother came at last to this spot, and found the people lamenting over a tiny grave beneath a willow-tree; and upon inquiry she learned it was her own child they were mourning, and how, during the night which followed, her lost son appeared to her in his ghostly semblance. At dawn, however, the spirit visitor disappeared, and nothing remained but the feathery branches of the weeping willow-tree, and instead of his voice nothing broke the stillness but the sighing of the wind in the foliage. Every year in March a commemorative service is held; and if rain falls on that day the people say it is Mmewaka shedding tears.

The flowering of the plum-trees at Kamedo earlier in the year will draw crowds from every tiny street in Tōkyō to drink in the beauties of the sight. *Gwa-riō-bai* (the Resting Dragon plum-trees) are sure of their worshippers, who will hang poetical tributes to the beauty of the blossoms, written on tiny strips of paper, to the gnarled and ancient branches; perpetuating the ideas which former generations of "plum blossom viewers" have inscribed upon the stones in the garden.

So, too, in the time of the iris, lotus, chrysanthemum, peach, wistaria, and other beautiful flowers, each conveys its lesson of beauty and artistic significance to a people whose lives for centuries past have been

attuned to the lessons that the "honourable flowers" can teach.

The art exhibitions of the land are also well patronised; and most who can afford to do so have, at one time or other, visited the Tōkyō "Royal Academy," where one can enjoy, twice yearly, a feast of art at an admission fee of less than a penny, and a cloak-room charge for the care of *geta* and umbrellas of about half a farthing! In provincial cities and towns the charges are even less, and many an exhibition of bronze, lacquer work, and *cloisonné* may be entered for a third of the price of the Tōkyō Academy.

Even the *kurumaya* spend their spare time in drawing in sand or the dust of the road; and the poorest and least artificially cultured of Japanese will know something—and frequently not a little—of *edaburi*, or the arrangement of the branches of trees. This knowledge too is not merely a pose; it is a living expression of the interest that the Japanese at large take in the more artistic side of life, and in beautiful natural objects; and is, therefore, common to all classes, because all possess the fundamental principles of artistic appreciation.

To Western minds the idea of a London cabman amusing himself in the family circle, or when visiting his friends, by the composition of poetry would be incredible. But in Japan the *kurumaya* (*jinrikisha* boy), the maid-of-all-work, the artisan, the coolie, the wife of the gardener, all compose tiny poems of a more or less finished character. Most, of course, are of the extremely simple form of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables known as *hokku*. But frequently much more ambitious efforts are essayed by a poet or poetess of the humbler classes, who by long practice has mastered the simpler forms.

"In so small a matter as cleanness," as a certain writer has seen fit to phrase it, the Japanese exhibit yet another

side of their widespread and national regard for beauty. European nations who are noted for cleanliness are not, we fancy, altogether actuated by the same underlying principle. With some it is brought about by a certain sense of the necessity which arises from circumstances of climate ; with others by a recognition of hygienic needs, or upon moral grounds. But although all these things may have some weight with the Japanese—and nowadays more than formerly—the underlying idea which makes every man, woman, and child bathe every day, and sometimes twice a day, is rather the outcome of an æsthetic than a moral or hygienic idea.

In regard to Japanese art in its widest sense, it must be admitted it is based upon both ethical and æsthetic principles. That it is a living and powerful influence forming national life to an extent that art has moulded that of no other modern nation cannot be denied. The art of Japan holds its place still in the life of the people, because it is not merely that of a school or of several schools, which a vitiation of ideas or change of fashion may affect materially and cause to fall into disuse or disrepute, but is a means of expressing the subtle and varied emotions and ideals which have come to belong to the race through the educative influence of centuries of thought and culture. It never fatigues nor loses its freshness of idea, because it never seeks to portray things seen in their minutest detail ; and combines the poetry of purest “impressionism” with much of the realism that convinces.



## CHAPTER XII

### SOME SUPERSTITIONS, LEGENDS, AND STORIES OF JAPAN

THE hair of Japanese women plays a very important part in social life and customs, and it is little, therefore, to be wondered at that the profession of hairdresser should be esteemed an honourable just as it is a lucrative one. The visit of the *kamiyui* is almost always an important function, for she "builds for time," not merely for a few hours; and the exquisite erections which her genius evolves may remain "up" for three or four days, or even a week. The fashionable and much-sought-after *kamiyui*, however, does not do the preliminary work herself. One of her little apprentices, deft and skilful, will first clean the hair, wash it, perfume it, and comb it with an apparently endless series of different-shaped combs. When she has finished her work, even if the *kamiyui*'s services were not to follow, the hair is in such a state of perfection that is seldom seen in Western countries. The labours of a fashionable Parisian *coiffeur* are crude by comparison. Thus it is that in the morning when O Ku-Sama (the Honourable Lady of the House), or her equally honourable daughters, perform domestic duties such as dusting and cleaning, one will find them doing so with their beautiful glossy heads of hair carefully and completely covered with either a handkerchief or a little blue towel. It was to permit of sleep without disarrangement of the hair arrangement that in

far distant times the *makura*, or wooden Japanese pillow, was invented.

Into the grand creations of the *kamiyui* enter quite a number of mysterious articles—loops and twists of fine gold thread or wire, multi-coloured paper-string, small bits of delicately tinted silk crape, tiny and mysterious steel springs, and strange, and almost at times weird, basket-shaped “forms,” over which the hair is moulded into the desired shapes before being finally fixed in place.

One would not imagine that the hair of most Japanese women, which is straight and rather coarse, would lend itself to artistic treatment, though the deep brown and finer hair which is often found adapts itself more easily to the *kamiyui*'s art. But all things are verily possible to the latter. Although ringlets are unknown (they do not, indeed, appeal to the Japanese woman's mind or taste), what marvellous substitutes are often seen. Shell-like forms, wisps, whirls, leaf-like foliations, exquisitely arranged masses in which not a single strand, nay, not even a single hair, seems to be awry; each lock of hair, indeed, passes into, and becomes as surely an integral part of the whole effect as is each line of a picture.

The art of the *kamiyui* is a great one, dating back to a period which is almost lost in the dim and distant past. Even in the mythical age of Japanese history, generations of *kamiyui* exercised their ingenuity and skill in devising new fashions in which to dress their clients' hair; and probably in no country of the world have there been so many beautiful forms of arrangement as in Japan. These have, of course, varied greatly throughout the ages; indeed, an expert judge of colour prints, *kakemono*, or other works of art in which women's hair-dressing is depicted can tell its age very accurately by the style of the *coiffure*. At one time it has been distinguished for an elaboration which deserves the epithet marvellous, at another for

graceful beauty, and yet another for a simplicity scarcely less charming.

In the past, Chinese, Korean, Malay, and Indian ideas of beauty filtered their way into Japan, and were adopted and afterwards improved by the more perfect native artistic sense. It is even possible to trace the influence of Buddhism itself upon the evolution of women's hair-dressing, as many of the feminine divinities of its pantheon are depicted as possessing the most beautifully arranged tresses. Kwannon, the Tennin, and many others have most exquisitely arranged *coiffures*. There are, of course, many ways of dressing the hair; even in the provinces one sees at least a score of styles, whilst in the towns fashionable *kamiyui* have numberless styles at their fingers' ends.

The baby girl's head is shaved clean, and even when, a few years later, the hair is allowed to grow, there is still a large tonsure retained, though this diminishes in size, year by year, until only a small round spot, about an inch to an inch and a half in diameter, remains on the very top of the head. This is the sign of the little maiden's virginity, and is partly concealed by the manner in which a band of hair is carried back from the forehead and fastened at the back of the head. This little tonsure is allowed to become obliterated after marriage, and then the more complicated modes of wearing the hair are adopted.

The hair of little girls is usually worn in the *O-tobakobon* style, unless the still simpler style of "knotting" is adopted. The "honourable tobacco-box" method of doing the hair necessitates it being cut to a length of about five inches all round, except over the brow, where it is cut even shorter. Right on the crown of the head, however, it is allowed to grow longer, and is there gathered up into the peculiarly-shaped knot which gives this particular style of *coiffure* its name. This form of hair-dressing is altered





SUMMER TIME IN JAPAN.



when the girls are old enough to attend a public day-school. Then the mode—a pretty and simple one—adopted is known as *katsurashita*; unless, indeed, her mother is bitten with European ideas, when the ugly foreign “bun,” less carefully arranged, sometimes takes the place of the much more neat and graceful Japanese fashion we have named. This latter mode has become very popular in boarding-schools of late years; and, indeed, the boarding-school miss of Japan may be often picked out from this very circumstance. Probably convenience and economy of time are chiefly responsible for the adoption of a foreign fashion which is so much less picturesque than the native one.

This period of school life, however, though longer than it was, say a decade ago, is comparatively brief, for the girls of the middle classes still frequently marry early.

When a Japanese maiden reaches the age of fifteen or sixteen her first really elaborate style of *coiffure* is instituted. The fashion called *omoyedzuki* has been the rule with her from say eleven or twelve to fourteen, after attaining which age the beautiful *jorōwage* mode is followed for several years, to be in turn displaced by the *shinjōchō* or “new butterfly” style. This style of doing the hair is followed by a large number of women and girls, of all ages above sixteen, and it is not considered in consequence very distinguished or *chic*. The beautiful and elaborate *shimada* or *takawage* fashion of doing the hair is chiefly followed by the coquettish amongst the upper class Japanese. As a general rule the more respectable and old-fashioned the family the simpler and smaller is the style of doing the hair; although whatever the method followed, the result is sure to be neat and attractive. It is the *geisha*, tea-house attendants, and *jorō* who adopt the most elaborate, startling, and larger styles. Most of these wear what is called a “high *coiffure*,” or *takawage* style.

Another change is made in the mode of dressing the



hair when a girl is between the age of eighteen and twenty; and from the latter age and twenty-four she generally adopts the mode known as the "triple" or *mitsuwage*, the basis of which is an arrangement of the hair in three loops. From twenty-five to twenty-eight the style adopted is known as *mitsuwakudzushi*, and this may be said to reach the high-water mark of elaborateness. Up to this time each change of style in the case of girls and women of the better class has been towards greater elaboration and beauty; but with the attainment of the age of twenty-eight a Japanese woman is considered to have reached the turning-point, and to be no longer young. Hereafter (except she be a *geisha*, or courtesan) there is but one style open to her, known as the *mochiriwage*. Unfortunately this simple style is also rather ugly, and the woman wearing it is certainly put at a distinct disadvantage, even though in some cases she has retained her good looks.

As might perhaps be naturally expected, the *coiffure* of the Japanese bride is very beautiful. It is quite different from any other style usually worn, and is known by the poetic and descriptive name of *hana yome*, or "flower wife." It is not only the most elaborate of all *coiffures*; but also the most beautiful and costly to arrange. So elaborate, indeed, is it that no description could convey any accurate idea save of its complexity. The married woman's *coiffure* is entirely different to those we have previously referred to. When the bride has destroyed the erection of the *kamiyui* arranged for her bridal, she wears her hair in several styles, according to her social position. The two principal modes are known as *kumesa* and *katsuyama*. The former is adopted by the women of the poorer classes; the latter is considered more distinguished, and is used by the women of the upper-middle and upper classes.

A strange custom in connection with hair-dressing is the shaving of Japanese girls by the *kamiyui*. Not only are the

cheeks, brows, and chins treated in this way, but even the ears and nose! There is nothing to shave save the brows, of course, except the fine peach-like down which beautifies the youthful cheek. This, Japanese taste, however, decides must be ruthlessly removed by the razor.

As might perhaps be expected in a country where hair-dressing has become a fine art, and where the hair of women is so highly esteemed, there are many legends and superstitions connected with it. There are numberless stories in which beautiful girls have been distinguished by their hair turning at night into hissing snakes, and who themselves are ultimately discovered to be the offspring of dragons.

In one pathetic and in many respects also beautiful story a maiden married the son of a *daimio* of high rank. They lived happily for a long period, until, through the slanderous tongue and certain accidental circumstances, the young husband became suspicious of his wife. Of course, his suspicions were groundless; but nevertheless they grew, and at last the young wife got to hear of them. She was consumed by a great hatred of the man who thus doubted her honour, and one night her dragon ancestry (so the story goes) must have asserted itself, for as the husband lay near her side her hair suddenly turned into serpents, which stung him to death. When the servants came in the morning they found their master dead and swollen with the poison of the serpents. Then, and not till then, did one of the retainers, who had been awakened by a noise in the middle of the night, remember that he had heard a rushing sound as of wings, and had seen, or fancied he had seen, a dragon fly out of the house and over the trees of the *yashiki* garden. Though a long search was made for the absent wife she was never found. And so the story is told, perhaps as a warning to jealous and suspicious husbands; perhaps to make men careful lest when they wed an

exceptionally beautiful girl they also ally themselves to a dragon in disguise.

Another belief is that jealousy between women can also cause their hair to turn at night into snakes; and there are many tales based upon this superstition. In the days of old Japan it was the custom for the wealthy men who kept concubines as well as legitimate wives, who were known respectively as *mekaké* and *O Ku-Sama*, to do so under one roof. And although by long custom this practice was found to answer fairly well by day, at night the hatred which animated both these classes of women was wont to reveal itself by the changing of their hair into a mass of writhing snakes, which (as the women frequently slept quite close together in the same room) uncoiled and crept towards each other in an endeavour to devour one another. There is one particular story which tells how a husband once awoke in the night to find his wife's hair and that of one of his concubines engaged in this horrible and deadly struggle; and the sight of the hatred which existed through his instrumentality so affected him that he became a Buddhist monk, and went into retreat for the rest of his life.

Jealousy, which in women is by the Japanese considered a great fault, even approaching a crime, was held to cause the hair of the person so sinning to turn into snakes, which bit and tortured her. Is there not in this idea perhaps an underlying suggestion of the nature of the mental torture which jealousy is undoubtedly capable of inflicting upon the unfortunate individual who suffers from it?

It is little to be wondered at, when we remember the care with which it is treated, that the Japanese woman should value her hair very highly; and that it should form, of all her physical possessions, the one she would least willingly lose. Indeed, in ancient times the unfaithful wife was not always killed; the husband often esteeming it





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A JAPANESE FISHING FLEET IN THE INLAND SEA.

sufficient punishment to turn the erring one adrift after shearing off all her hair. Thus it is that only the most devout faith or devoted love will cause a woman or girl to voluntarily sacrifice her entire head of hair. Than do this many a Japanese girl, if need be, would undoubtedly sooner sacrifice her virtue for the salvation or preservation of her parents or loved ones from want and misery.

The sacrifice of portions of their heads of hair by women is, however, sometimes made, and the locks may be seen hanging before many an Izumo shrine. It is also the custom for the widow to cut off at least some part of her hair so that it may be placed in her husband's coffin. The quantity is not, however, fixed by any precedent or custom; and though, doubtless, it varies according to the affection in which the dead were held, it is usually not large, and does not generally affect the appearance of the widow's *coiffure*. There are, however, many instances yearly where the bereaved one mourns so sincerely and deeply that she determines to remain faithful to the memory of the dead; then with her own hand—which must often tremble with emotion caused by the sacrifice—she cuts off all her hair, and lays the rich mass upon the knees of the dead. In such a case as this it is never permitted to grow again to any length.

There are many quaint superstitions connected with Inari or the Fox God, as he is commonly called, although Hirata, one of the greatest of Shintō scholars, holds that there is no god of the name. It seems certain, at all events, that Inari-San, or the Fox God, is of comparatively modern date, as although numerous representations of foxes are found in the courts of most Shintō temples, it is a remarkable fact that not a single statue or figure of a fox is discoverable within all the extensive surroundings at Kitzuki of the oldest Shintō shrine in Japan. It seems, therefore, probable that the idea of the fox as a super-



natural being was not introduced into Japan until about the eleventh century. The fox has been a favourite subject with Japanese artists, and phosphorescent or ghostly foxes are often seen in the old coloured prints; and occasionally they are shown in them as wandering about at night with tongues of fire appearing above their heads; and very frequently the fox's tail, both of sculptured and painted representations, is decorated with the symbolical jewel of ancient Buddhist art.

But if Inari-San may be considered as the Fox God, he is also worshipped under a number of other forms. Like some of the deities of ancient Greece—Zeus, Athena, Hermes, for example—Inari has been multiplied because of the different attributes which were ascribed to him. At one place he is the God of Coughs, Colds, and Chest complaints; at another, he is particularly supposed to answer all kinds of prayers, and at Oba there is an Inari with a wonderful reputation in this respect. On the wall of his shrine there hangs a box containing small clay foxes. Those who have any request to make, or any desire they wish gratified, take one of these little figures and slip it into the sleeves of their *kimono*, and thus carry it home. It is necessary to keep this and pay it due respect until such time as the petition which has been offered up is answered. Then the little clay fox is taken back to the temple and replaced in the box; and if the benefited one can afford to do so, he is expected to make some offering to the shrine. They say that the supply of little foxes has nowadays to be constantly replenished; not because of the increase in the number of devout pilgrims, but because of the depredations of tourist souvenir-hunters.

The Fox God is also worshipped in parts of Japan as a healer in a general way, and as a dispenser of wealth. In the latter capacity he appeals strongly to the "religious sentiments" of members of the *jorō* or courtesan class, and

there is, indeed, a very interesting shrine of Inari in the same court in which stands a temple of Benten quite close to the Yokohama Yoshiwara. Here there are many fox images of varying size. Some are now very beautiful with age, the stone of which they are carved having "weathered" and become lichen-stained. To this temple comes many a beautiful *jorō* from her neighbouring prison-house, with brightly-carmined lips, painted face, and wearing the exquisite old-time garments which no Japanese wife nor maiden would wear. Most of them purchase *O-rōsoku*, or paper-wicked candles, which the old man who sells them lights and sticks upon a spike in the lantern, much as do the old women in the Roman Catholic churches of Western lands. Then the *jorō* offers up her supplication for good fortune, and perhaps for that dim ultimate marriage of which most of them dream, and goes her way down the steps.

At the back of most Inari shrines there is generally to be found in the wall of the buildings, a couple of feet or so above the level of the ground, a small hole of about six or seven inches across. This little aperture is the fox-hole, in which are placed offerings of *tofu*, and other food beloved of foxes. To this place peasants and the lower classes suffering from different complaints come, and from the little ledge outside the hole they take a few of the grains of rice usually found there, and eat them in the belief that they will cure their disease or prevent sickness. The fox, who is supposed to live in the hole, is, of course, the invisible one to whom those who seek his aid refer as O-Kitsune-San. There are, however, supposed to be several kinds of ghostly foxes; and all possess supernatural powers. There are naturally good and bad foxes; the worst of all, and the most dreaded, being the Ninko or Man Fox. It is supposed to be little larger than a squirrel, and to like to live in houses. So long as it is pleased all

things will go well ; but if offended, misfortunes and terrible disasters will surely overtake the unfortunate people who have given it shelter.

The wild fox is also bad, and is supposed to be in reality a wizard, with the power of changing into other shapes and making itself invisible. But although it possesses the latter quality, a dog can always see it, and in consequence it is afraid of dogs. Another quaint belief is, that if its shadow fall on water whilst it is changing from a fox to anything else, it is the image of the fox which will be seen. The country folk often kill the wild fox, notwithstanding the fact that it is believed that the fox's relatives, or even the ghost of the dead animal itself, will bewitch the slayer. But, on the other hand, any one who has eaten fox's flesh cannot be afterwards placed under the spell of enchantment.

In the province of Izumo goblin foxes are much dreaded, as they are supposed to be able to deceive people by enchantment ; to become inmates of a home and members of a family, and make individuals of the latter an object of terror and horror to their neighbours, and also to take demoniacal possession of people, which ultimately causes them to go mad. Following beliefs of other lands—which credit beautiful women with power to destroy men—the Japanese believe that the goblin fox generally assumes the form of a beautiful woman for the purpose of wreaking its vengeance, or of working its evil spells. There are many tragic and fascinating stories of the fox woman and her wiles ; and, indeed, a dangerous, scheming woman, more especially if of the *jorō* class, whose art it is to enslave men and strip them of all they possess, is referred to as *kitsune*, which is a word of the deadliest insult.

The fox, however, has apparently encountered St. Anthony even amongst the Japanese, for it is admitted



that it does not always find it serve its diabolical purpose to assume the guise of a beautiful woman; and so there are many legends of foxes which have taken on other and very varied shapes.

Regarding the demoniacal possession of human beings by foxes, there are, indeed, strange stories. Those possessed often conduct themselves much as do those suffering from hydrophobia. At other times they tear off their clothing, and run naked through the streets. Yet at others they lie on the ground, froth at the mouth, and yelp like foxes. It is also recorded that lumps appear beneath their skin, which apparently have separate lives of their own. When pricked they move to another spot in the body, and by no means can they be grasped or compressed by the hand. People thus possessed also not only speak languages which none can comprehend, and of which they themselves were formerly quite ignorant, but also will only eat "foxes' food."

It happens (as might indeed be expected) that often the poor supposed victims of the fox's machinations are cruelly treated by their relatives and neighbours, being beaten and burned almost fatally in the hope that the fox may be driven out. But if no improvement takes place in their condition, the Yamabushi or exorciser is sent for to argue with the fox, who (so tradition and folk-lore tales aver) is frequently "open to reason," and upon the promise being made that he shall have plenty of just the kind of food he most likes, agrees to go away. The food is to be immediately sent to the temple to which this particular invisible fox states he is attached. The poor victim, when the fox goes out of him, usually falls down senseless, and so remains for a considerable time.

It is impossible to separate the chaff from the grain in the matter of these fox legends and stories owing to the complicated and often contradictory nature of the

statements made in them. But it will, we think, occur to most, that the victims of the fox are after all probably in many cases epileptics, or smitten of the same kind of demoniacal possession or madness that figures in many stories of the Middle Ages and Biblical times.

As is perhaps natural amongst those who are supposed to be possessed of foxes, there are in Japan many who manage to turn this fact to good account. The more superstitious, at all events, of the country folk are very much afraid of giving offence to a *kitsune-mochi*, lest he should send some other fox to take possession of them. And thus in remoter parts of the Empire *kitsune-mochi* have been known to gain a great ascendancy in the villages or districts where they dwell, said to be not altogether dissimilar in character to the power exercised by the witch doctors of other lands. In many a village the richest man is a *kitsune-mochi*, owing to the fact that he is so much feared that he is permitted to do much as he pleases, and even to rob his neighbours. Sometimes, however, the wealth acquired is gained by perfectly legitimate means. About a quarter of a century ago there was a perfect terrorism concerning foxes in certain districts, and several far-seeing individuals bought up large tracts of land at almost inconceivably small cost for which no one else would make an offer. Nowadays the land is not only worth ten times as much as they gave for it, but its successful cultivation has served to disabuse the minds of the peasantry of the ancient idea that it was "fox haunted."

Sometimes, too, to gain their own ends, men have been known to masquerade as foxes or as representatives of the god Inari. They usually seek to victimise shopkeepers, who are always inclined to treat the god reverently, so that good trade and wealth may result. There are many stories of the ingenuity of pretended "foxes";







A FISHING VILLAGE ON THE SEA COAST, HOMMOKU.

some of whom have been known to show a "brush" beneath their *haori* to help the illusion! One story must, however, suffice, as it will show not only the extent to which the fox legends have a hold on the imaginations of the country and other folk, but also is a remarkable example of a type of "confidence trick" which has many a Western counterpart.

One day a pretended Inari entered the shop of a certain well-to-do shopkeeper in a small town in the province of Izumo, and after letting the proprietor see that he was an Inari, told him that he was anxious to do him good on account of his great piety, and that the god had commissioned him to add to his wealth by a very simple device; all the shopkeeper had to do was to leave whatever sum of money he liked by a certain *miya*, or shrine, at night, and in the morning he would find it doubled. The unsuspecting man, for several nights running, placed small sums on the appointed spot, and in the morning found that the Inari's words had verily come true! Then he by degrees increased the amount with equally satisfactory results, and at last was placing several hundred *yen* at the *miya*. These large sums were also miraculously increased, till at length he determined to risk his whole fortune. So he raised money on his business premises, withdrew all his capital from the bank, and placed the whole amount, which was a very large sum indeed, in the usual place. In the morning he hastened joyfully to the spot, thinking that now surely his fortune was made, only to find that the money had—vanished. The Inari had made his *grand coup*!

In Japan, to even such fragile, though often beautiful things as dolls, many superstitions and legends attach. There are, of course, dolls of all sizes and kinds, from the tiny *beppin*, or "beautiful woman"—which is but a phantom thing made out of paper and a flat stick, but yet so beautiful in its fragility and in its little painted face that it seems insen-

sibly to call up memories and visions of other beautiful girl faces of Japan—to the big baby dolls, which do not in their finest completeness often appear in the European market. It is concerning these latter that legends and superstitions are chiefly current. These beautiful dolls, which accurately represent babies of two or three years of age, are so well dressed and so lifelike that at a very little distance they deceive even the most experienced foreigner. Indeed, so true to life are they that many a pretty photograph of a little maiden carrying her baby brother or sister about on her back is merely a little girl with one of these dolls, which are much more manageable when sittings are being given than the living models.

It is doubtless because of this extraordinary lifelikeness that the belief exists that some dolls in course of time actually become alive. It is not, we admit, a common belief, nor is it so frequently met with nowadays as formerly ; but even at the present time certain dolls are treated with all the consideration which would be given to a real baby—are given food, and are provided with a bed to sleep upon, besides possessing a definite name. If a boy doll, it is usually called Tokutara-San, and if a girl, O-Toku-San ; and these dolls are thought to possess feelings like other children—to become angry and cry if ill-treated or neglected, and to be the direct cause of misfortune to their owners in the latter case. They are also credited with the possession of supernatural powers to a high degree.

In a certain village in the province of Izumo there was, and probably still is, a girl doll which enjoys a fame quite outside the immediate district in which its owners reside. Indeed, *Kishibojin*, the goddess—who for some terrible sin, committed in a state of pre-existence, was born a demon and devoured her own children, but afterwards, being converted and redeemed by the compassionateness of Buddha,



became the specially loving protector of infants and children, to whom Japanese mothers pray for their little ones, and childless women that she may send them beautiful boy children—was scarcely more venerated. This wonderful O-Toku-San was constantly borrowed by childless women, who kept it for a time, attending to its supposed wants most carefully, and fitting it out with new clothes of as beautiful a description as they could afford before returning it. The story of the “doll which had a soul” goes on to say that all who had it for a time in their possession were blessed with their heart’s desire. And there is even a legendary story that many years ago a woman was nursing the doll whilst sitting by a stream, and, falling asleep, it fell into the water and was swept away. But, lo and behold! when she ran stumbling amidst the rocks which strewn the bank in vain endeavours to rescue the precious doll, it suddenly floated or swam ashore, climbed up the steep bank of the river, and was found a few minutes later by the grief-stricken woman sitting beside a rock, unhurt and dry!

The Japanese idea concerning these miraculous dolls would appear to be this: a doll only attains these powers after it has been in a family for many years. A new doll is only a doll; but even the common ones in Japan are treated much more tenderly by their little girl owners than in any other country in the world. It is understood by the Japanese child that dolls are not given to them to be knocked about and ill-treated or broken, but to be tenderly cared for, so that the same doll is often handed down from generation to generation. In some families there are “honourable little people” which were made more than a century ago. It is at least a pretty fancy, if nothing more, that the tender care and love which is lavished by successive generations of girl owners upon their dolls shall in the end bear fruit in induing their treasures with souls. If

one should ask a little Japanese girl, who believes in this, how it is possible for a doll to become alive, she will answer without hesitation and with evident conviction, "If it is only loved greatly, it will of course live."

It will be easily understood, however, that even the most carefully-treasured dolls must in the course of many generations become broken, and even fall into slow decay. This sad time comes in every family where ancestors' dolls have been treasured. But even when one is undoubtedly "dead" it is not thrown away; nor is it burned; nor thrown into pure running water, as must be other sacred things when they are no longer needed or have become otherwise useless; nor is it buried. It has still a mission. It is solemnly dedicated to the half-Shintō, half-Buddhist divinity, Kōjin. Though there would appear to be neither images nor other representations of this god, there is in the grounds of many a Shintō and Buddhist temple an enoki-tree (*Celtis Wildenawiana*) sacred to him, and in which he is believed to have his habitation. Before this tree is often placed a little shrine and tiny *torii*, where the country folk pray. Here is the last resting-place of the beloved dolls who are dead. They are generally either placed upon the shrine itself, at the foot of the tree, or if it be hollow (as is frequently the case), in the heart of the tree itself. But the real pathos of these relics of by-gone years is that they are seldom thus dedicated to Kōjin whilst their owners are alive. And so these mutilated and often crumbling dolls of long ago may be the poor remains of the playthings of some dead child, and often probably the silent memorials of some dead woman's happy girlhood, found, when she died, hidden carefully and tenderly away in some cupboard or cabinet.

The superstitions relating to the sea are numerous in Japan, as well as in most other lands. Many are terrible. There is a common belief amongst the fishermen all round

the coast, and perhaps more especially amongst those who toil upon the waters of the beautiful Inland Sea, that the three days of Bommatsuri (the Festival of the Dead) always find the sea angry. On the day following the launching of the *shōryōbune*, or Ships of the Souls, the ocean is the highway of the dead, whose returning ghosts must pass along it on their voyage back to the mysterious land from which they have come. On that day the sea is poetically called Hotoke-umi, or the Tide of the Returning Souls. On it no one dares to venture; not a shell-gatherer wades along the sandy shore, and no boats can be obtained by would-be voyagers or explorers of the exquisite coast, for no fisherman will venture afloat. And on the night of that day, when the vast ocean is kept sacred to the dead, there are many who say that, whilst standing by the seashore, they have heard a murmuring of voices like the hum of a distant town, which was the sound of the unknowable language of the spirits of the returning ones.

If, as of course must often happen, a fishing-boat should find itself far out to sea, and unable to reach a port on the night of the sixteenth day of the seventh month, notwithstanding the strenuous efforts the crew are sure to make, then the dead will certainly rise round about the ship, and whilst waving ghostly arms will cry that a bucket may be given them. This request is never refused if there be one on board. But before it is thrown over to the spirit hands which are stretched out so appealingly, the bottom is always knocked out; otherwise, the dead (angered that the ship should trespass upon the waters on the night assigned to them) would fill the bucket and use it to swamp the ship. It is always, indeed, considered unlucky to drop a sound bucket overboard.

But the Returning Ghosts, who have the freedom of the sea, after all, but for one day in every year, are not the only spirits dreaded by seafaring folk. There is the



terrible Kappa or river goblin, which, however, haunts the sea in the neighbourhood of the mouths of rivers. Then there is the horrible Ape of the Waters (possibly a devil-fish or octopus), dreaded by all swimmers, which drags them down, and is said to devour merely their entrails, so that their bodies, when they float to the surface and are found, or drift ashore in due course, show no wound, but are wonderfully light and hollow.

In many a village along the coast there stand the old homes of men who went down into the deep waters and never returned. Sometimes they are deserted and the thatched roofs are tumbling into ruins; at others one finds the widow and sons and daughters of the dead dwelling in them. But in the *hakaba* (cemetery) will be the tombs of the dead ones, and at certain seasons the white paper-lanterns will shed their soft light upon them; for in Japan they erect tombs to the never-returning dead.

There are also many people who believe that the drowned never make the journey to the Meido (World of the Dead), but float for ever in the currents off the coast, oscillate with movements almost lifelike in the swing of the tides, and that it is they who drag down the swimmer with white ghostly hands amid the breakers and the surf. So seamen always speak reverently, or at least respectfully, of *O-baké*, or the honourable ghosts, who are, strangely enough, believed to dread cats; and thus it is that on most Japanese vessels one is carried as a talisman. Of all cats those of three colours are for some reason or other most esteemed.

In the many fishing hamlets round the coast there are sad hearts, as in those of other lands. All the sadder, perhaps, because from most homes some one has gone across the sea never to return; some one whose ghostly figure will never reach Meido, and can, therefore, never return in company with the other beloved ghosts of departed ones.



IRISES BY THE LAKE.

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Amid the swirl of tides, in the eddies of currents in which dwell the dreaded Kappa, amid the surf that breaks booming on the sandy shore, they are doomed to remain for all time; dreamed of often by sorrowing ones, who in the end frequently beseech Buddha that they may remember them in the night-watches no more.

Connected also with the sea is the abode of the little children's ghosts, where, in a wonderful and beautiful cavern at Kaka-ura, is the great granite figure of Jizō, the god and protector of the little ones. Though a Buddhist deity, before the figure are found not only a tiny *torii*, but also *gohei*, showing that as regards reverence for this god the two faiths meet, and that at the feet of the tender divinity who so loves the little children's ghosts, there is no division brought about by conflicting creeds. In this deep, beautiful grotto are other figures of Jizō and many little "towers" (piles of stones), which the ghosts of the children are doomed to erect as penance. When there is a great storm outside the surges dash into the cave like raging demons, and then the tiny towers are swept away, and the poor little ghosts of dead children have to begin their work again.

Any visitor to the cavern who may happen to destroy these tiny piles of stones (and they are not easy to avoid) is bound to build double the number, and thus not only atone to the child-souls for cruel destruction of their labour, but actually aid them in their endless task. There are many stories told in the district of fishermen who have been compelled or have ventured to pass the night in the cave. All tell how they heard the fluttering and rustling as of the child-souls, and the murmur of the soft infant voices of the invisible host. It is only when night has brought darkness to the earth that the children come to build their towers of stones at the feet and close to Jizō, and the belief is that every night the stones are changed.

These child-souls, so it is said, are too frightened, lest "the Lady-Sun" should peep into the cave and see them, to work by day. Strange to tell, by some inexplicable mystery many travellers have seen in the crumbling stone-dust and sand, which lies upon the floor of the cavern, the tiny footprints of the little workers.

Here they say the infant ghosts at night tread lightly in performance of their task, leaving traces of tiny bare feet, which, when the day dawns and the sun's heat dries the sand, vanish one by one.

In the cavern are many, many pairs of tiny *zori* (straw sandals), which the pious and the pitiful have brought and laid there for the use of the children's ghosts, so that they shall not cut their little feet on the rocks or bruise them on the stones. But, strange to say, all the footprints are of naked feet. Perhaps the Oni (demons), who torment them and destroy their towers, may not permit the little ones to use the lovingly offered gifts.

It is not easy to discover what connection there can be between the spirits of little children and the sea. But in many Japanese myths and legends the mysterious ocean, which smiles and sobs and roars around the coast, is held to have some mysterious and awful connection with the land of the souls of the dead.

Thus it is that the little ships of straw, often so wonderful in their completeness and mimicry, are launched on the last night of Bommatsuri upon the rivers and the sea, and that the sorrowing mothers of Japan, in loving memory of their little lost ones, cast a hundred or more tiny prints of Jizō into some river far away from the ocean, believing that all running water flows to it, and that the sea itself borders and reaches that distant land to which the souls of little children must journey.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE LIFE AND COMMERCE, PAST AND PRESENT, OF THE TREATY PORTS. SOME MODERN TENDENCIES, AND THE FUTURE OF JAPAN

**I**N the previous pages of this book we have dealt scarcely at all in detail with the great changes which are taking place in Japan: reforms, transformations, and upheavals in all grades of life, and in almost every department of it, save that of the National religion. Although many competent authorities seem agreed that it will take generations to alter very materially the main characteristics of the Japanese race, every year makes it more obvious that the outward seeming of the nation is undergoing vast transmutations. The intrusion of the West upon the East during the last decade has been plainly marked.

In no place, too, in the past has this subtle Westernising of the East been more marked than in the foreign concessions of the treaty or open ports (now done away with as regards their former character and jurisdiction), where in the often conglomerate hideousness of the streets one is almost on every side brought face to face with scraps and suggestions of far-off places. In this phase of the life of modern Japan one comes in contact with corners of Southampton, Liverpool, New York, Marseilles, or Rotterdam, as though portions had been torn off those particular towns and magically dropped piecemeal into an Oriental setting.



In the new mercantile houses—that is, the “foreign” ones—one sees the evidence of change just as one notices also the astonishing contrast they present to the long, low, unsubstantial native shops of the old order. The West has not in the last decade made any pretence of adapting itself to the East; it has frankly sought to supplant it; and in this one can trace the strong evidence that Japan herself is undergoing a change.

In the towns, or rather should we perhaps say seaports, where the foreign element is most strong, one nowadays finds dwellings of almost every conceivable and inconceivable type of architecture; the English country-house with bow windows, the French *château*, or villa, with turrets, and Indian bungalow competing with each other for recognition; with trim and very foreign-looking gardens surrounding them, in place of the old-style native houses and charming and interesting gardens. The roads even have been “tamed,” as an American girl traveller somewhat happily phrased it; and the air of conventionalism, as understood with us and in the United States, is surely, if slowly, dominating the wider areas.

Along country roads, whose picturesqueness was but a few years ago unspoiled, are nowadays disfiguring signs and telegraph posts; and at certain points outside the more Europeanised cities, one gets the familiar vista of factory chimneys and church spires, looking not a whit the less hideous because often also incongruous, towering amid a picturesque red-brown sea of low roofs. The ancient wooden “go-downs” by the waterside have given way to brick cubes, with corrugated iron roofs and iron sliding-doors. And the social delights of the West, bars and billiard lounges; and schools and mission halls crowd each other. In company with these things naturally came foreign police, doctors, chemists, grocers, dairymen, lawyers, dressmakers and tailors. The two last-named





A CORNER OF ONE OF THE OLD-TIME TREATY PORTS.



make a fetish of and advertise largely the fact that they give "English-Paris" style; and incidently that they are therefore willing to convert the hitherto invariably picturesque into the generally ugly.

In the area of the old-time foreign concession is the town-hall, in which are held public meetings of all kinds, and where at times lectures, concerts, and other social functions take place. Sometimes (but very rarely) a theatrical company on a "world" tour will give a performance, if such a port as Nagasaki or Yokohama happens to lie in their way; and what with English and other clubs, racecourses, cricket grounds, lawn-tennis, croquet, and bowling-greens, there is very little, except the environing native element and climate, to remind one that it is really the East.

The population of these particular districts nowadays is cosmopolitan to a degree. Russians are a bit "out of fashion," but one finds one's own countrymen and countrywomen, French, Germans, Americans, Swedes, Danes, Swiss, and even a few Italians, Spaniards, and Levantine wanderers. The very numerous Chinese enjoy a little corner all to themselves; for which fact most Europeans are not ungrateful. The dominant foreign races are, however, the English and Americans—the former to the larger extent.

One of the aforetime treaty ports perhaps affords one of the finest spots in the world in which to study character. In few places, indeed, are representatives of more races gathered together in a smaller space. Everybody knows everybody else. It not unnaturally follows that all the faults—which expatriation, whether forced or of business necessity, seems to develop—and some of the finer qualities of the more dominant races can be more easily and accurately recognised than in the home-land, where the need for the display of "character" is not perhaps always

so marked. In the foreign colony one hears "strange tales" verily; some are such as do not bear either repeating nor thinking about overmuch; others are of brave, straight deeds done by men, and women too, who, at all events to the world outside, have seemingly little of the heroic about them, from which quality, however, such deeds nevertheless usually spring.

But very considerable as the effect of these cosmopolitan colonies of Westerners has been in the past on the Japanese themselves who have come into business or social contact with them, the actual sphere of influence has reached but little beyond the concession itself; and it is more than possible that this sphere, already comparatively narrow, may in the immediately coming years be circumscribed and even eliminated altogether. These colonies sprang up into existence to fill a supposed or real need; their growth has been in most cases of too mushroom a character to encourage the belief that they are likely to extend their borders in the future, or even perhaps be permanent in themselves.

The "native town," or real Japanese city, which surrounds and lies stretching beyond, is little known to the trader and the official, clerk, or merchant dwelling in the foreign quarter. To each of them it remains, often for years, a veritable *terra incognita*—a mysterious region possessing for them few attractions; which, as their individual taste may dictate, they may or may not enter once a year. Some Europeans have lived half a score of years in the concession without once really penetrating the Japanese town by which they are hemmed in.

They are there for business purposes, not as students of native life or character; and if good business men, have had no time to think how very quaint, interesting, and picturesque this "beyond the pale" may possibly be. There is so wide a distinction between the races that to

merely cross the line of demarcation between the foreign settlement and the native town was, not so very long ago, almost as great a thing as a trip across the Pacific. And but a few years ago to enter the labyrinths of narrow Japanese streets was to have the dogs barking and children staring as though one belonged to some other sphere; whilst some, even of the older folk, would call out "Ijin," or "Ke-tō-jin," which signifying "hairy foreigner," or even "hairy foreign devil," could not be esteemed as conciliatory.

The old-time hostility was not, however, altogether unprovoked. The foreign merchants from the first sought and had their own way in everything. They forced upon the native firms with whom they dealt their own Western methods of business; which were opposed to all Eastern ideas, and plainly, alas! for amicable trading, showed that the newcomers regarded the native dealers, manufacturers, and shopkeepers with whom they were to attempt to trade as dishonest and tricky. Thus it was that in the times to which we are just now referring no European would think of purchasing anything until it had been in his possession long enough to be thoroughly examined; or would take any order from the Japanese for imported goods unless such order was accompanied by a substantial percentage of the whole amount to be ultimately paid. This came to be known as "bargain money."

It was useless in those days for the Japanese to protest; they were compelled to submit. Their yielding, however, was only that they might conquer in the end.

Almost without exception the foreign towns of the various concessions proved of astonishingly rapid growth; and with this growth came the involving of immense capital. These two circumstances proved to the Japanese how much they had to learn ere they could hope to successfully resist the trade conditions imposed by the alien



merchants, let alone dictate their own terms. It was not an easy lesson to learn. We have referred elsewhere to the fact that in old Japan shopkeepers and even merchants ranked below the farming and peasant classes, and yet the Japanese found the foreign traders assuming the tone and demanding almost the status accorded to native princes. This state of things, so entirely at variance with ancient Japanese ideas, was in itself enough to lead to friction of a very pronounced kind. Added to this, as employers, the foreigners were generally harsh and frequently even brutal.

But the Japanese race possess certain qualities which have stood them in good stead in their march to the front in the line of civilised nations. They desire to learn. They recognised very quickly that though these alien traders imposed harsh conditions upon them and browbeat them in trade, yet they knew how to make money; and, what was more, with few exceptions (which to the honour of the community in general were repudiated) kept to their bargains, and paid what they agreed promptly and without question. Moreover, they lived in an imposing and, to the Japanese mind, a luxurious manner, and on the whole paid their *employés* well, if demanding unwearying services. It appeared to the Japanese that it would be well for their own young men to learn how to make money, and to do their own trade, and even to suffer in learning, and thus save the country from falling under a foreign yoke. The far-sighted amongst the Japanese of that day foresaw that in the then distant future their nation would possess a mercantile marine of her own; have banking agencies; enjoy foreign credit; and then, if only her sons had been well trained in the arts and tricks of the foreign traders, they would be able to hold their own in the world, and ultimately rid themselves of the haughty and overbearing Westerners. Time has proved how accurate an estimate



A GLIMPSE OF THE COAST OFF KOBE.





of Japan's possible future was formed by the thinkers of the race in those days which now seem so far remote.

Thus it was that for a comparatively long period the import and export trade of the country remained entirely in the hands of foreigners. In the course of a few decades it grew from almost nothing to a value of hundreds of millions; and all the time Japan was being "milked" and exploited by the foreigner, and chiefly for his own benefit.

But at the back of the mind of the apparently only too acquiescent Japanese, all the time was the idea and knowledge that in this they were only paying in order that they might learn what they needed to enable them to take the field in the commercial world and markets themselves. The foreigner must have smiled, nay, did smile, many times. He mistook (and he could not be altogether blamed for so doing) the patience of the Japanese for easy-going indifference, and a forgetfulness of past injuries and past injustice.

The opportunities of Japan arrived happily in the ordinary nature of things, and without any great international upheaval. The great and increasing influx of foreigners, bent upon making their fortunes, gave Japan her first advantage. The competition for Japanese trade, which in the natural order of things ensued, tended to automatically break down the hard and fast Western commercial methods, which the Japanese could never fall into, but which the alien merchants and dealers had forced upon them. The new firms which arose on every hand were only too glad in their scramble for wealth and orders to take the latter without big advance payments in the shape of "bargain money," and also to run other risks which, contrary to the old methods and ideas, were not really unreasonable. Thus, by force of circumstances, what the Japanese had "kicked" against, but had to submit to in the past, at

length was swept away; and it is only fair to add that the relations between foreigners and the natives improved immediately. The latter still brought into their commercial life much of the natural politeness and courtesy in dealing which is, indeed, inherent in the race, though it may not mean any great standard of commercial morality from a Western point of view. But at the same time the Japanese were not any longer disposed to submit to browbeating or other forms of ill-treatment which had been so prevalent in the commercial system of former times. Indeed, they showed a wholesome capacity and ability for combining against harsh or unjust treatment, and ability to hold their own in any dispute in which undue force was employed.

Well within a period of five-and-twenty years after the institution of the concessions and the establishment of these colonies of foreign traders, the latter, who had in course of the first decade begun to calculate how long it would be ere they could get the whole country into their own hands, were brought to understand how completely the astute Japanese had misled them by apparent submission; and to realise that whilst the younger Japanese were serving them in the capacity of clerks, warehousemen, and wharfingers, they were but at school learning how the foreigner did things.

Soon the Japanese commenced to supplant, undersell, and oust the smaller foreign shopkeepers. A little later larger retail businesses were compelled to close because of native competition. A few years later still and even the biggest firms realised that to hold their own would not be easy, even with a couple of generations' experience of European markets and their needs to assist them; in a word, it became suddenly clear that the days of rapid money-making and easily-piled-up fortunes had gone for ever, although with hard work there was still plenty of money to be made in the Far East.

In the old days all the personal needs of the foreign settlers had been of necessity supplied by the foreigners themselves, and hence had arisen a large retail trade which might almost be said to have lived on the export trade. It was not long, however, after the Japanese entered the field before it was recognised on all hands that the foreign retail trade amongst foreigners themselves was thereby doomed; a few years and it practically disappeared. In the early days most of the *employés* and clerks of the foreign merchants lived at hotels run by their own countrymen and could afford to do so. Very soon after Japanese competition became of a serious character the more economical of these found that they could not continue to afford to do this. It was cheaper to live in a Japanese house with or without their own cook or servant; or to do this and have meals sent in from one of the numerous Japanese restaurants which quickly sprang up for the purpose of supplying the foreigners' needs. And nowadays they mostly occupy native-built houses (some of them designed in a semi-foreign style), which they rent from Japanese owners; or they live in Japanese houses, where they are "done for" at so much per month.

No longer is foreign furniture so much imported for the use of aliens. The carpets on the floors of the houses, rented in the way we have mentioned, are Japanese matting. The furniture is mostly that made by native cabinet-makers; the ornaments, save for those sentimental derelicts in a foreign land, photographs, small ornaments and pictures, brought from home are also Japanese. In many cases the aliens' clothing, shoes, umbrella, and other similar articles are of Japanese make; and even his tooth-powder and soap (stamped with quaint ideographs) are the same. If he is a smoker he soon learns that he can buy good Manilla cheroots at half-a-dollar cheaper per hundred from a native tobacco shop than from a foreign



warehouse, and get as good quality. And still stranger, perhaps, if he wants books to read he can find a better selection at a Japanese than at a foreign bookseller's, and purchase the latest productions of Kipling, Hardy, Hall Caine, Marie Corelli, Guy Boothby, or Mrs. C. N. Williamson; or Mark Twain, Winston Churchill, Mary E. Wilkins, Upton Sinclair, or Mary Johnstone cheaper there than elsewhere. If he wants to send home a birthday present in the shape of a bit of Satsuma, bronze, or *cloisonné*, he visits a native, not a foreign dealer; the latter would charge him a hundred per cent. more for the same article. And when his mother, sister, or some one else's sister wants his latest photograph, he goes to a Japanese studio to have it taken. Two guineas a dozen for "cabinets" is an unknown price in Japan, and good photos of that or an approximate size are often obtainable at a dollar a dozen. It is said that no foreign photographer could hope to make a living in Japan. We only know one who is attempting to do it.

What, too, is true of the supply of the needs of the bachelor clerk is equally so of the man who has brought a wife with him, has married a member of the foreign colony, or has attached himself to one of the charming little girls which Japanese matrimonial agents are always ready to produce, and whose services as housekeepers can be obtained upon easy terms for a definite or indefinite period. Nearly all the foreign settlers' tradespeople nowadays are Japanese. Twenty, nay even ten years ago, many would have been foreigners. A native butcher, fishmonger, grocer, greengrocer, and milkman waits upon the "Honourable Lady of the House" for orders, or comes round with a good selection of articles and produce. The newcomer may possibly even nowadays start purchasing his hams, bacon, and tinned meats from an English or other foreign firm, but he will soon learn that he can get just as good of

a Japanese house, and at cheaper rates. The same remark will apply to his drinks. Probably the beer he will in the end drink is Japanese brewed ; and certainly for the ordinary and lighter kind of table wines, he will learn to deal with Japanese importers, who will give him better quality at a lower price.

If he is sick (which is more than probable) he can have a foreign doctor at two or three dollars a visit ; or a Japanese with equally good, and in many cases superior, degrees at less. If he is wise, indeed, he will take the native article ; though, if he is patriotic, he will possibly patronise his fellow-countrymen. But it is safe to say, that the foreign doctors (with few exceptions) who nowadays remain, trying to compete with Japanese rivals and earn a decent living, are not of the highest class ; they are often derelicts, ne'er-do-wells, who have failed at home.

A great advantage that the Japanese physician has over his foreign rivals is, that he can and does furnish the necessary medicine himself at prices which "defy competition." There are, of course, amongst native doctors good and bad. But the very good are almost unsurpassed, and are usually acquainted with all the latest developments in their profession, and the special ailments incidental to the climate ; whilst the foreign medical men are mostly old stagers who have been "out" years, and, except for a stray copy of the *British Medical Journal* or *Lancet*, have read little since they settled. They are not, however, to be altogether blamed. There is little chance for them, because of the existing conditions in Japan, which make it difficult for the foreigner to successfully compete with the frugal, more enterprising and industrious Japanese.

The same thing applies to dentistry, which at one time was so largely in the hands of the foreigners. Nowadays a Japanese dentist is fully as skilful as his European or

American contemporary ; and he does his work (so one is told) even more neatly, and at less cost.

It will, we think, be easily seen from the facts which we have been able to present to the reader, that although undoubtedly some of the European-Japanese wholesale houses are still doing well—and there certainly is an opportunity of developing trade to a profitable extent by them—the day of the “small” man, and more especially of the foreign retail shopkeeper, is doomed, except inasmuch as he is able to cater for the passing tourist, who does not remain long enough in the country to gain the knowledge that he or she would be generally better served and at cheaper rates in native shops. The life of the retail foreign shops of the concessions was, indeed, for a short period prolonged by the dishonest trickery of a few of the smaller Japanese dealers, who not only used to sell inferior goods in foreign packages and bottles, but also to forge trade marks ; with the natural result, that for a time the foreigners distrusted everything not specifically of native manufacture which came from native shops. The common sense and honesty of the Japanese trading classes as a body, however, soon succeeded in putting down a practice which could only in the long run be detrimental to themselves. It was all along possible for the native shopkeepers to undersell their foreign competitors, because they can live more cheaply.

These facts had been for a long time recognised as indisputable in the foreign colonies, but for years the delusion remained that the great firms of exporters and importers occupied so strong a position, that they were, so long as due attention was paid to the necessities of their business, practically immune from attack. It was seriously thought that they could for an indefinite period continue to control the whole of the native commerce with Western nations, and that no Japanese firms could either acquire the necessary capital or learn sufficient of the workings or



the ramifications of this trade to successfully compete with them. So Westerners, shutting their eyes to the lesson which they ought to have learned and applied in regard to the fate of the smaller businesses and retail houses, jogged along contentedly. They said, in effect, the smaller things have gone. No matter. The great houses, which had been built up, step by step, since the early days of trade to and from Japan, would undoubtedly remain much the same.

But underlying this seeming tranquillity there was a growing feeling of hostility, the mutual and not incomprehensible dislike of West for East, and *vice versa*. The foreign papers published at the various treaty ports fanned the flame by satirical and often unwise attacks upon the Japanese; and the by no means unpowerful native press replied with undoubted effectiveness, at least so far as their own readers were concerned. The few foreign papers, which were either fair or partial to the Japanese, though ably conducted, were not either financially or otherwise weighty enough to neutralise the very serious feeling of resentment which was aroused in the native mind by the continuous attacks of their contemporaries. A disgraceful and wordy journalistic warfare ensued. The English papers made unwise charges of barbarism and immorality against the Japanese, upon the fringe of whose land, so to speak, the writers were clinging; and the native press retorted by publishing doubtless often garbled versions of all the scandals of the foreign colonies for the millions of Japanese to read. That grave, moral, and other abuses existed in the concessions was only to be expected, where a heterogeneous collection of foreign races was gathered together, of whom not every individual could be expected to be like Cæsar's wife.

The race question soon became a burning one in Japanese politics, and was the chief "plank" in the patriotic

party's platform. A strong anti-foreign league was founded, and met with startling success. The foreign colonies were openly spoken of as hotbeds of Western vice; and in the end the situation became so menacing that only the strongest action on the part of the Government prevented what would have been an immeasurable disaster.

When the war with China broke out the foreign press at once commenced another unwise campaign; openly siding with the enemies of the land in which the writers lived and earned their daily bread. Imaginary reverses were printed in the style of the "newer journalism" of our own land which concocted the "Pekin massacres"; and hard-won victories were belittled. At the end of the war the cry was raised that "Japan was becoming powerful and dangerous"; and when Russia interfered to snatch the fruits of victory, her action was approved, nay even applauded. One does not need to be deeply versed either in international affairs or the Japanese character to comprehend the effect of this fresh outbreak on the part of the alien press in Japan. The act was naturally considered as an insult; and such things, when they affect the nation at large, are not easily forgotten or forgiven. The old strained relations between natives and Europeans revived, and whilst the foreign colonies were alarmed at the new treaties Japan was entering into—which, amongst other things, had the effect of bringing foreigners resident in Japan under native jurisdiction—the Government was alarmed lest the insulting tone of the alien press should lead to a national demonstration and even uprising against foreigners. It was recognised on all hands that an anti-foreign agitation, once started, would be a formidable thing with which to have to contend.

It is, of course, impossible here to enter fully into details of the various crises which marked this particular period of Japan's transition. It is sufficient to say that the danger



A KURUMAYA EATING HIS DINNER, AND WEARING  
A RAIN COAT.





was faced by the Japanese Imperial Government, and admirably dealt with ; the fact that England had shown herself so friendly in the attitude of a naval power having much to do with simplifying a very knotty problem. England, too, had made the revision of existing treaties possible, in the face, it should be noted, of the fierce opposition of her own subjects in Japan ; and the Japanese were not ungrateful nor unmindful of what the concessions implied as regards a recognition of their national status and honour.

It is not, of course, likely, nor is it indeed possible, that the racial feeling which was at the bottom of the trouble in the first instance will for many years disappear. It may be not for centuries. The Japanese and any other race are so dissimilar that a true or complete *rapprochement* or *entente cordiale* of any save the most superficial character is quite impossible. The Japanese in reality understand the foreigner (and by this we mean comprehend him as regards his defects, excellences and differences of character) quite as little as the foreigner understands them ; and that is saying a good deal. It must also not be forgotten that the foreigner is always an invader whose encroachments of all kinds are to be resisted ; courteously where he, on his part, is not discourteous in his advance, but resisted all the same. This attitude is a national as well as an individual one.

The long period of absolute isolation which the Japanese underwent, to which we have elsewhere referred, has had its lessons. One of them is to make them at first suspicious, and in the end only guardedly tolerant of the foreigner of whatever nation. Thus it is that to-day the latter in a sense pays a tax because of his origin. He will under no circumstances be treated as a Japanese, save perhaps by his most intimate native friends. A different price for the foreigner is the recognised rule ; except, maybe, in the few stores and shops which rely exclusively upon foreign

patronage. Japanese servants, workmen, clerks, and others will not (unless they have some other thing in view in addition to wages) work for an English employer at the same rates as for one of their own race.

If one attends the theatre, visits an iris garden, puts up at an hotel or inn, it is the same thing; the charge is in excess of what a native would pay for the same seat, sight, or accommodation. So that this may be so large companies and syndicates have been formed, which, controlling scores of the hotels and inns throughout the length and breadth of Japan, are able not only to enforce the principle of the two tariffs in these, but also in a measure to dictate to the proprietors of smaller inns and to the shopkeepers what they shall charge the foreigner. The hotel proprietors who cater for native custom care nothing for the latter, and certainly do not in any way attempt to attract his money. There are two chief reasons for this; firstly, the richer class native guests do not care for the presence of English or American tourists; and secondly, because the European traveller wants a room to himself, or at least to himself and one other, which would possibly be let to a party of five or even six Japanese. We may mention another reason which in some measure affects hotels that do not specifically cater for foreigners. It is the custom, and has been from time immemorial, for the hotel proprietor to charge for food supplied at little more than cost, relying upon the *chadai* (tea money), given by each guest on leaving, to provide him with a more or less satisfactory margin of profit, according to the generosity or otherwise of the donor. The same thing applies to the services of the servants, which are not, as a rule, charged for. This giving of *chadai* is, of course, an old and well-recognised Japanese custom conformed to by all natives; and, let it be added, very seldom abused by them. It was not, however, found to answer with foreign guests. Many (the more generously



disposed) objected to have a matter of which they were in reality quite ignorant left to their conscience. Others (the mean) were not slow to take advantage of the situation, and give little or nothing, thus obtaining board and lodging at much below what they might have been expected reasonably to have paid, and in many cases at a price that left scarcely any profit for the unfortunate innkeeper.

Two tariffs were thus rendered necessary: one for natives who honestly discharged their obligations by giving the proper *chadai*; the other for foreigners who either did not or would not understand that the payment of the bill was not a complete discharge of their indebtedness. It is because many proprietors do not care for the trouble of a dual system of bookkeeping that they make no attempt to cater for European guests, and indeed do not welcome them.

It is not, indeed, at all easy for foreigners to obtain Japanese domestic servants—the Chinese having to be employed very largely, or Japanese of quite an inferior class. The alien has in the past been inclined to think that when Japanese enter European service, either as clerk or other more domestic *employé*, it is because they like it. Nothing could be further from the truth. They are merely there that they may learn what they want to know; that they may acquire some special kind of knowledge which may be useful to them, and cannot be acquired elsewhere. When the lesson is learned they go, often giving no reason, and one is compelled to get some one else to replace them. Japan has thus, through the early years of the foreign concessions, and ever since, been, in the persons of individual clerks, wharfingers, engineers, and servants of all kinds, slowly but surely acquiring all the knowledge requisite to enable her to manage her own affairs and compete successfully with the rest of the world.

It has taken the latter a long time to realise this fact.

Even after the famous line of Japanese steamships, the Nippon Yusen Kwaisha, had become one of the largest in the world, and Japan was doing a direct and immensely increasing trade with China, India, and other parts of the world, and had large and reputable banking agencies, and was sending the best of her "coming race" of young men to Europe to enjoy the benefits and advantages of a university education, the foreigner still found it convenient to believe that there was no need for extra energy, no cause for alarm lest Japan should in the end sap his hitherto unchallenged commercial supremacy. Though on all hands aliens (having served Japan's purpose) were being replaced by natives who had learned all they could teach them, the foreign merchants were still hugging to themselves the comforting delusion that their supremacy could not be seriously threatened, and that the vast machinery of commerce, which they had built up with such care, would be like a steam-engine minus fuel or water in Japanese hands were they to attempt to seize it.

But this confidence was destined very soon to be rudely shaken. In the middle of 1895 a certain foreign house brought an action against a Japanese commercial undertaking on account of the refusal of the latter to accept delivery of goods ordered. The verdict of the Japanese courts, involving tens of thousands of dollars, was given in favour of the foreigner. The Japanese firm neither appealed nor declined to pay. But to the British firm's intense astonishment, they found themselves face to face with a vast and powerful trade organisation of whose very existence they were probably ignorant, which calmly (on behalf of the delinquent Japanese firm) informed the British one that though the money would be paid if pressed for, it might be to their (the foreigner's) advantage to compromise. Upon inquiry the latter discovered that were they to press for payment in full, a boycott would be issued







SPRING TIME IN JAPAN.

against them operating in all the chief commercial and industrial centres of the Empire. To have enforced payment in full would have meant ruin to the successful but nevertheless unfortunate plaintiff firm. The compromise was effected, much to the monetary loss of the British house, and the incident, although in diplomatic language "closed," struck dismay in the settlements. There was no remedy at law against boycotting, and at last the foreign traders woke up to the fact that they were not only in for keen competition, but that they were at last very much at the mercy of the Japanese firms, the possibility of whose successful commercial rivalry they had pooh-poohed and ignored till too late. Guilds of far-reaching influence had, in the years when Japanese traders had been supposed to be asleep or to be quietly submitting to foreign browbeating and dictation, been founded by all the great industries in Japan, and the moves and organisation of these could be regulated and set in motion all through the land if necessary by telegraph. It was at last seen that the judgments of even native tribunals, if adverse to Japanese interests, could be set at nought, and that opposition to Japanese interests could now be successfully and even speedily beaten down.

There seems little doubt in the minds of those best able to judge that the growth of foreign trade, which will undoubtedly come with the further opening up of the country, will be more apparent than real, and that competitive native firms will in the not far distant future practically drive out alien merchants. It seems, indeed, more than possible that the foreign colonies as such will cease to exist, and that in them only a few of the greater commercial agencies will remain (as they do in all the chief ports of the globe), and that even the fine and costly houses of the foreign residents, which the prosperity of ancient times encouraged them to build, will pass into the occupation of the Japanese. It seems almost equally certain that the investment of large



sums of alien money will no longer be made in the interior.

After all, that these things should ultimately happen is not so much a cause for wonderment as at first appears. Japan is merely gradually ridding herself of elements (the foreign traders and shopkeepers) which in the past have proved disturbing to her national progress and the native management of her own commerce. She has been perfectly within her rights in her determination to regain possession of all concessions wrung from her at a time when she had little prospect of figuring as one of the great powers of the civilised world, and in abolishing foreign consular jurisdiction. This determination is shown by the gradual elimination of foreign *employés*, once necessary, as the Japanese had much to learn regarding commercial customs and methods; the resistance of the Japanese congregations to the authority of alien missionaries; the resolute boycotting of foreign merchants, when the actions of the latter appear in any way to menace the interests or prosperity of native firms, or the right of conducting business in their own way; and finally, by the growing disinclination of the Japanese to enter into employment in foreign houses, except for the purpose of learning some trade secret or system of commerce.

But although no one who knows the set of circumstances and the evolutionary processes which have brought about the development of Japan's greatness, along lines which have certainly worked to the detriment of the foreign traders of the old-time concessions, will deny that the race feeling has had a great deal to do with it, there is more than this at the back of the Japanese mind. For years the more able and intelligent of the race were less concerned at the presence and domination of the foreigner as a foreigner than as an indication that the nation was unable to take care of its own interests and manage its own affairs,



and that upon the Mikado must rest a stigma in the eyes of the other nations so long as the commerce of his people remained in the hands of and under the control of aliens. This is really the root of the whole question, and is what made the Japanese determined to put an end to concessions, to develop their commerce for themselves, and to do a direct trade with the world at large without the intervention of the foreign middleman. Much has already been done by the Japanese along the lines we have indicated; but the final move in the game is not yet, nor has Japan shown the whole of her strength in commercial enterprise and organisation.

The future of Japan is a problem which has exercised the minds of statesmen of almost every civilised nation, ethnologists and students of modern history. The progress of the Japanese has, indeed, during the last decade been so astonishingly rapid—nay, even almost meteoric—that to “place” the race definitely in even the near future of the nations is recognised as an almost impossible task.

The result of the Russo-Japanese War upset many calculations and predictions which had been made and founded upon the results of the previous struggle with China. Japan has, in a word, made history so fast that the usual methods of calculation of possible national progress appear inadequate and likely to be falsified in estimating hers. It would certainly be most unwise to venture upon any prediction which was chiefly based either upon the past, or upon the supposition that existing tendencies and methods of development will, of necessity, continue much the same in the future. But, putting aside the possibilities of further complications, or even a further struggle with Russia, or a breach of amicable relations with the United States (which for many reasons, into which it is unnecessary to enter, seems to provide the most probable point of friction), or of disorder within

Japan itself which would necessitate the suspension of the present constitution, and even perhaps lead to the temporary reinstitution of a modern type of Shōgungate, it is safe to say that enormous developments and radical changes are safe to come both in the interests and against the interests of the nation at large.

But taking as a basis for prophecy the assumption that violent changes will neither be rendered necessary nor take place automatically, it is possible to arrive at a probably not very inaccurate estimate of the general results which will be evolved from a series of rapidly alternating periods of action and reaction, which are almost certain to distinguish the life of the Japanese race during the next decade.

To take the physical question first. There are certain indications that, with the adoption of many European ideas, in the dim future (perhaps by the dawn of the twenty-first century) the Japanese will have become a finer, somewhat taller, and more physically efficient race than they now are. This view is supported by facts, and at least three good reasons. Firstly, in the cities the Japanese are at last becoming accustomed to a more nutritive diet, more flesh is eaten. This circumstance must have considerable effect upon the growth. Nowadays few large towns are without a considerable number of restaurants where "Western" cooking is practised, and where meat dishes can be obtained almost as cheaply as the older form of Japanese food. Secondly, there is now a systematic and well-considered gymnastic and military training of all the able-bodied youth of the Empire, which, whatever certain writers and theorists may choose to say, can scarcely fail to have by similar means the same effect as has been recorded in Germany, where a marked increase in stature, muscular development, and average chest measurement has been brought about. Then, thirdly, owing to the demands made upon the time

of the young Japanese by more perfect systems of education and military service, marriages are not now contracted so early, and this circumstance must have a beneficial effect on the coming generation. In the past marriages between boys and girls were very common, naturally leading to the bringing into the world of feebly constituted children.

Of late years a very marked improvement in the physique of quite young children has been noticeable, and that the Japanese race is capable of great physical development, if properly trained, cannot be denied. One has only to notice the remarkable differences of stature in the individuals forming an average Japanese crowd to realise this. Considerable improvement in the average stature is quite possible in the comparatively near future, given a more stringent social discipline, and the almost universal adoption of efficient systems of physical culture.

Regarding the question of what is commonly called moral improvement the prospects of the future are not so bright. Indeed, rather the reverse is the case. Those who have deeply studied the old moral ideals of the Japanese race, which we have in a measure dealt with elsewhere, will be prepared to agree that they are not less admirable than our own; and that in the code of Japanese morals one had at least something which was attainable by the average man living a simple and quiet existence under a system of patriarchal government. Indeed, statistics of recent date go far to show that untruthfulness, dishonesty, petty crimes, and crimes of violence are more frequent now that Japan is more "civilised" than twenty or even ten years ago. This fact does not, we admit, necessarily point solely to a decadence in the Japanese themselves. It is perhaps more an indication of the increased keenness of the struggle for existence which has developed defects of



character (common to all humanity) that had hitherto lain dormant or semi-dormant in the Japanese race.

The ancient standard of chastity was not greatly (if at all) inferior to our own, nor were moral conditions in reality much worse than with us. The ideal was different, the attitude of the race regarding such things was and still is different—that is all. At any rate as regards the chastity of married women the standard was in ancient times higher than with many Europeans nowadays. Regarding the morals of the men, it is perhaps too much to claim that they were above reproach ; but in what civilised country in modern times would it be possible to claim that they are ?

The social conditions which brought about and led to the recognition of a system of concubinage were so widely divergent from any set of conditions affecting a Western people, and the standard so different from that which is set up as indicative of the best possible social conditions by Westerners, that an impartial judgment cannot be arrived at unless these conditions and ideals (difficult to comprehend, we admit) are recognised and understood. Thus it happened that in Old Japan professional vice was less found and less recognised than it is at the present time. It has been said (quite incorrectly and unjustly) that the Japanese language contains no word indicative of chastity, as we understand the term. Missionaries, in particular, have often repeated this statement as an indication that with the absence of the word the thing itself does not exist, and does not find a place in the Japanese moral code. Nothing could be more misleading. We ourselves have derived the word from the French, and it would be equally just to say that the English have no idea of chasteness because there is no English (Anglo-Saxon) word in common use for the idea which the foreign-derived word has come to convey so accurately and clearly to one's mind. Any really good English-

Japanese dictionary contains several Japanese (foreign derived words) for the idea. The word in most common use with the Japanese implies the ancient meaning of strict, upright, firm, honourable, evil-resisting; and we venture to think that none of these qualities can, as a general rule, exist with unchasteness. Thus it may be said that the Old Japan, of not, after all, so long ago, can be compared in the matter of conventional morality very favourably with many a Western nation. As a general rule the people—from instinct, from the innate love of the beautiful and of culture, and from a dislike for the sordid or ugly—were better than their system of laws required them to be.

Sudden reforms which have taken place, and the institution of new codes, will not and cannot at first conduce to progress or immediate good. In moral things, at all events, national sentiment must count for far more than man-made codes or laws. A nation is moral or not because its people are imbued by a sentiment (based on religion or otherwise) of morality, not by reason of the mere existence, or even attempted strict enforcement, of a code of laws. So in Japan: before the highest Western standards of morality can take root and flourish, there will have to be that ethical change of feeling, always slow of growth, which can only be developed by long use, discipline and training.

When one approaches the subject of intellectual progress and the future of Japan, in that regard there is more of hope. Although it would be useless to expect that the rate of future advance can be reckoned on the basis of that of the last twenty-five years, or, indeed, that Japan has really advanced in that period as far along the road as her most enthusiastic admirers would have one believe, there can be no doubt but that the magnificent educational system which is in progress of building up will in the end accomplish all that is expected of it.

The position of women and girls, too, has improved, and this in itself makes for progress. Nowadays the Japanese girl is little behind her brother in the intellectual advantages she enjoys, and the facilities which are provided to enable her to obtain a good, sound education; and at present this system is travelling along lines which make for the betterment of the nation at large, is singularly and happily free from the "sex antipathy" and bitter rivalry which is possibly in the future destined to prove the undoing of ourselves.

In one thing, however, Japan is not likely for some generations to reach the high level that she has attained in other departments of life and progress. The average capacity must remain lower than that of Occidental races. Mere scientific knowledge cannot rapidly raise the level of average workaday intelligence, which so largely settles the place of a people amongst the nations. There are, of course, exceptionally brilliant men amongst the Japanese of to-day; but they cannot themselves alone ensure a satisfactory future or national progress. Some students of the latter and of national character have been inclined to think that the possession of a mathematical mind is most likely to enable the individual, and consequently the nation at large, to attain greatness. If this be so, it is a significant fact that at present the Japanese as a whole are not mathematically brilliant; and proceeding upon the theory which has been laid down, it is interesting to know that this mathematical faculty is being cultivated in Japan most assiduously, and special attention is being given to mathematics not only in the greater colleges, but in the lesser schools. The results which have been already obtained are distinctly encouraging; but time must elapse ere anything like national efficiency in their respect can be attained.

There are signs, however, in Japan, both of retrogres-



sion as well as of progress; and it is certain that she will take longer to "find herself" than her most ardent supporters have seemed to think.

In some departments of public life—more especially should we say in that of education—she has attempted too much, and, as a consequence, has during the last year or two had to return to what may be called the "limit mark." It is essential to Japan's permanent progress that she should develop her own individuality, and not seek to borrow that of any other nation.

In support of this we may point out that the endeavour to force the knowledge of another language upon the masses of Japanese students and school children, was found to have detrimental and even disastrous effects; and we are bound to record this although the language most taught was English. The attempt to teach the nation English wholesale was unsuccessful, and involved a very considerable waste of time, and an immense waste of money. The benefit derived from the study of the language was, strangely enough, chiefly upon the lines of modifying Japanese and making it richer, more ductile, and capable of expressing new lines of thought, which modern happenings and developments had brought into being. There was and is a considerable absorption of English (and even French and German) words, which can be traced not only in the changing speech of the more educated classes, but also in the colloquial language of the old settlements and the towns which environ them. Even the grammatical structure of the spoken language is being affected; affording one more proof of the remarkable assimilative qualities of the race.

The Japanese Court has, for some years past, been to a very considerable extent Europeanised, and this fact cannot fail to have affected very materially the rest of the people. "English style" is more and more seen in the

attire of the upper middle-class men, although happily less so in that of their women-folk.

Japan is not likely to forget the benefits she has derived from contact with Western peoples, even though foreigners engaged in commerce gradually dwindle in numbers, and the ancient concessions have passed away. But the lessons taught her will not cause her to reverence the memory of the teachers—as she did and does that of her Chinese instructors of ancient days—in that they have been her teachers in purely material things, and have done nothing to add to her artistic knowledge, or to the purity of her animating spirit.

It is even possible that the Western world may in the distant future find in Japan a formidable and unmerciful rival, animated by the ancient national spirit, which will brook no barrier to triumph and advancement. Certainly those who regard her in the light of a peaceful rival (except so long as peace affords her sufficient scope) are blind to the signs of the times, and ignorant of her past history, and the type of character it has developed.

But, nevertheless, Japan's mission in the Far East may after all be a great and even beneficent one, if she is blessed with rulers who know how to develop her great resources along peaceful lines, and to recognise that the greatest empires are those founded by a united people upon commerce and industrial expansion rather than by the spilling of innocent blood.

THE END









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